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## POLITICAL THOUGHT





# POLITICAL THOUGHT

## THE EUROPEAN TRADITION

By J. P. MAYER

IN CO-OPERATION WITH

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## INTRODUCTION

MAN, when history first meets him, is a social animal. Political thought is the epitome of his experience of life in society. It is his attempt to state the manner in which his institutions work, and the principles on which they must be organized, in order to work better. It is concerned with facts, but also with the values by which facts are appraised. If practical emergencies are the occasion which lends it wings, it acquires, once launched, a vitality of its own. It becomes, as it gathers way, an independent force, carving channels in which, for good or evil, future history will flow, and dictating, at times, to the actors in the drama. Its theme is not only the State, but all forms of association in which men unite to avert common perils and serve collective needs.

Some of these needs are general and constant, others things of time and place. It is the mark of sane reflection to do justice to both. Since the most important fact about human beings is not their race, colour, nationality, class, or creed, but the fact that they are human, the discoveries which thought makes are of permanent significance. Since man lives in a world of diversity and change, the validity of the expression which it gives these discoveries is not absolute, but relative. The truths which it announces are clothed in fading garments. In order to remain true, they require to be restated.

It is at moments of crisis that restatement is most needed. In the following pages an attempt is made to offer it. *Political Thought: the European Tradition* is cast in the form, not of a system of doctrine, but of an historical study. Mr J. P. Mayer, who inspired it, has proved by his previous writings his qualifications for the task of editor. English readers are already in his debt for his selections from Nietzsche, Constantin Frantz, and Lorenz von Stein; German, for his translation, with an illuminating introduction, of the *Leviathan*. His discovery and timely publication in 1932—six months before the night of German

scholarship began—of certain of the earlier writings of Marx, which till then had lain unprinted in the archives of the Social-Democratic party at Berlin, has thrown a flood of new light on the development of a thinker who, if often the victim of unfriendly critics, has suffered still more, especially in England, from the caricatures of admirers. Mr Mayer has been fortunate in the colleagues whose collaboration he has secured; and the present volume sees the light, not as a piece of book-making, but as the natural sequel of his and their studies. The work of a group of scholars of several different nationalities, it is equally international in its conception of its theme. It surveys the characteristics of the varying contributions which different epochs and peoples have left as a legacy to the Europe of to-day. But the selection and interpretation of political theories is itself the assertion, if not of a theory, at least of an attitude and standard by which theories are judged. Such a standard, though not obtruded in the present work, is implicit in its title; nor have its authors been at pains to veil their convictions beneath a decorous drapery of academic ambiguity.

In a world half stunned by the strident self-advertisement of competing creeds, they do not seek to win attention by espousing the cause of yet one more pretender; they suggest that there is a court in which all claims must be tried. Europe, they remind the reader, is not a raw colony, to truckle to hoary sophisms; or to be swept off its feet by the glitter and swirl of pretentious novelties; or to be struck stupid with terror because some frantic dervish offers, not for the first time, conversion or the sword. It is a mature civilization, which has known strange adventures, and, though wounded, has survived them. It has tamed many barbarians, has sinned and suffered much, has seen better days and worse. It should have learned that in life, as in art, there are limits which it is wisdom to observe. It is the appeal to those reserves of experience which is the note of this book.

The method which it follows is determined by its subject. All departments of knowledge are a social product. They are replies more complete than a single mind can give to questions more complex than a single mind can raise. Political science is more social than most. Individuals solve, or attempt to solve,

its problems; but history poses them. The riddle must be stated before it can be answered; it can be stated only in the particular terms of a specific epoch. The meaning of liberty, equality, and the other great abstractions; the nature of churches and their relation to states; the conditions of peace and co-operation between nations; the justification and limits of the different species in the tangled genus labelled property; the causes of class stratification, and the diseases produced by it—trite topics such as these derive their practical significance from the historical context in which they occur, and their generalized discussion yields more chaff than wheat. All contain explosive forces, but forces rarely released. The volcano is usually inactive; men cultivate its slopes, and sleep beneath its shadow. The seminal periods of political speculation are those when an eruption breaks its and their slumbers. At such moments they master old enigmas, less because they will, than because they must. The works in which their answers are recorded still retain a smell of fire.

It is of the nature of political science, therefore, that much of its best work is topical. Hobbes and Locke in England; the Encyclopaedists, Rousseau, and de Tocqueville in France; Marx and Engels among the Germans, are a reminder that some of its high landmarks were canonized as classics only after a career, not always too respectable, as *pièces de circonstance*. In frankly avowing a practical objective, Mr Mayer and his collaborators are, at least, in good company. Their theme is thought; but it is thought in action. They seek a line through the jungle before men's feet to-day, by scanning the permanent features of the landscape through which hitherto their journey has lain. They approach political ideas, not as museum specimens, but as a dynamic. Conscious that doctrines with sufficient iron in them to survive are more often the children of the market-place than of the study, they feel not less interested in the turbulent youth which such doctrines reveal when Buff-coat discourses Scripture politics to his general, or *cabiers des doléances* are endorsed by assemblies of long-suffering peasants, or a handful of sweated labourers asserts against the powers of this world its right to combine, than in their finished formulation in the works of the

great masters. So what they offer the reader is not an anthology, all polish and no life. They present the living organism, flower and roots together, in the historical environment from which both drew their sustenance.

That environment is, first, Europe, and, secondly, the nations of which Europe is composed. Is not Europe, it may be asked, a pious fancy, not a fact? Seen in memory or imagination from the walls of Nanking or the shores of the Pacific, it may float before the mind with the glow and movement of life. Across a distance so immense, smaller distances dwindle; Rome, Paris, and London, Stockholm and Madrid group themselves for a moment as points in one pattern. But the mirage recedes as the traveller advances. He seeks a civilization, and finds a chaos of suspicious states.

There are conceptions which are true and important, but which will not take too fine an edge. Save as an area on the map, that of Europe is among them. The most obvious marks of the unity of a single state are seen in the sphere of government and law. If the Europe of these pages is more than a phantom, it is clearly not in that region that its substance is to be sought. It is true, again, that if, as they suggest, Europe connotes not only a continent, but also a tradition, then the existence of a reality corresponding with the term is a matter of degree. There are *enclaves* within it where that tradition is dim; there are areas outside it where the flame burns more strongly. It is true, finally, that, whatever the sense in which Europe may be interpreted, its political boundaries have changed from time to time, while its physical and spiritual frontiers do not necessarily coincide. Seen from Foreign Office windows, Russia has been for two centuries the east of Europe; but to forget that she is also the west of Asia is to make nonsense of her tragic history. The influence upon her of European thought has been profound; but it has taken the form less of gradual permeation than of a series of sudden shocks, which required, before they could be absorbed, to be adapted to a medium different from that which gave them birth. To-day, in returning to the west ideas borrowed from it, she returns them both enlarged and distorted by her own interpretations of them. No one who reads the chapter

in this work which treats of the United States will doubt that, in the style and quality of her intellectual life, America belongs to Europe. But her freedom from the curse of European power-politics and European class-systems is part of her pride. Where policies relating to these matters are in question, most Americans are less conscious of affinities than of contrasts.

It is among the merits of this book that, without straying from its central theme, it reminds the reader of two truisms, both easy to forget and both important to remember. The first is the permanence of the national characteristics, with which, if a European tradition exists, that tradition has to reckon. The second is the vanity of judgments which assume that those aspects of a nation's life which happen at any moment most to strike its neighbours are necessarily to be regarded as national characteristics. The latter error is natural when tempers are inflamed, though, if least unpardonable at such moments, it is not confined to them. The French denunciation of the people of wolves and tigers that made the English Civil War; the English denunciation of the nation of assassins that made the French Revolution; the view given currency by Voltaire when he wrote that, while France ruled the land, and England the sea, Germany ruled the clouds, and the opinion, its lineal descendant, once in fashion in the two former, that Germans were a race of dreamers, with a genius for the production of lexicons and cuckoo-clocks; the conviction of conservative Europe that the America which counted was that of Davis, not of Lincoln; the absurd caricatures, based on travellers' tales of two tottering old regimes, which once did duty, to the general confusion, as authentic pictures of China and Russia—such extravagances belong to the vast, and ever-growing, scrap-heap of verdicts which have missed their mark. The error which consists in underestimating the toughness of national idiosyncrasies is equally common, and even more disastrous. Half the passionate nationalisms of the world have arisen as a retort to it.

It is proper that, in approaching a work which has Europe as its theme, the reader should remind himself of the curse of Babel. But the unity of a group, whether of individuals or of nations, can take more than one form. It may be weak or absent on



certain planes of life, but it is not necessarily, for that reason, an unreality on all. A community can remain a community, even though it lacks the marks of what the thought of another epoch called a *societas perfecta*. In that respect Europe differs less from some other societies than, in an age when all forms of organization are dwarfed by one—the great leviathan of the national State—is commonly remembered.

China is one example. Till yesterday her unity, like that of medieval Christendom, was the unity of a civilization rather than of a political system. Like Christendom, she was conscious that she was not merely a State, but the embodiment of a spirit—an oasis of culture and light, divided, as by a wall, from the barbarism of the outer darkness—and, as in Christendom, the unity she derived from an ideal did not prevent the occurrence of violent internal struggles. The personality of her people overflowed the traveller like a tide; in no country was the impression of a nation as a single living organism more insistent or profound. But, though culturally mature, she was politically retarded. Her intellectual and aesthetic achievements were on one plane; her constitutional arrangements and economic order remained on another. That she would grow—as she is now growing—the hard shell of material organization which a culture needs for its protection, seemed for long unthinkable, even to her admirers.

What till recently was true of China has been true also of the west in some phases of its history. Societies do not advance on all fronts at once; nor, happily, do all of them resemble the Prussia of the eighteenth century in sacrificing every grace and refinement of life to a single-minded determination, first to exist, and then to expand. Greece has meant something to mankind, and the gulf which divided her from the barbarian seemed to contemporaries profound. But Greece, in the golden age of her literature and art, as the profoundest of historians reminds us, was a nightmare of political anarchy. The Italy of the Renaissance remains a shrine to which men of all nations pay their pilgrimage of devotion; but from Dante to Machiavelli, and Machiavelli to Mazzini, the greatest of her children wrung their hands at her disorders. Almost two thousand years have elapsed since the ruthless Roman engine ground political Jewry into a

heap of dust; yet what State can show triumphs to compare with the spiritual victories which the Jews have since won? 'There were Germans, and among them the greatest, when most of Germany was a welter of petty princedoms. An American type, and an American style of social life, were firmly established, when it was still a question whether the Union would be born, and, if born, would survive.

To the objection, therefore, that the Europe of which they write is a literary stage-property, the authors of this book need not look far for an answer. The criticism, they might fairly reply, is not free from the fault of abstraction which it condemns. It makes too much of legal categories, which, though a power, do not reign alone. In assuming that political unity is the sole unity which counts, it confounds the spirit of a civilization with one, and not necessarily the most significant, of its consequences. Spirit and matter are not to be divided, and the quality of western civilization is partly the product, no doubt, of natural factors. To turn from Europe, with its long and deeply indented coastline, and two inland seas in the north and south, to a map displaying the sprawling land-mass of Asia, is to receive a lesson in the obvious. It is to be reminded that, if nature has made it difficult for the different parts of Europe to live at peace, it has made it impossible for them to live in isolation. But forces more profound than geography are involved. Some of them were suggested by Renan, in the famous passage quoted later in this work, when he wrote of '*la conscience morale qui s'appelle une nation.*' The secret of a people's being, he urged, is to be found neither in mere environment, nor in the unpalatable myth of race, but in its spiritual and social heritage—in the memory of common sufferings and common achievements. '*Dans le passé un héritage de gloire et de regrets à partager, dans l'avenir un même programme à réaliser; avoir souffert, joui, espéré ensemble, voilà ce qui vaut mieux que des douanes communes et des frontières conformes aux idées stratégiques. . . . Une nation est donc une grande solidarité, constituée par le sentiment des sacrifices qu'on a faits et de ceux qu'on est disposé à faire encore.*'

To apply that conception, in its full range and depth, to Europe as a whole would be to exaggerate. If sufferings ennoble, they can also degrade; there are memories which divide, as well as

memories which unite. But to suppose that the existence of a score of sovereign states is the sole reality which matters, as though the facts of human life and the principles of human conduct changed with every change in the uniforms of customs officers, is something worse than exaggeration. It is mental perversity and moral obtuseness; it is the attitude of a fool, in the scriptural sense of that term. A traveller through Europe will not find everywhere the same architectural forms, as he finds the curved roof and tunnelled wall in every corner of China; but he will encounter, even in the remotest parts of it, certain features, like the arch and the vault, of a common tradition. The same is true of more important matters. Incapable of building, the ignoble nationalism of the moment—the latest incarnation of *'der Geist, der stets verneint'*—chatters fiercely of destruction. Yet how little, for all his trail of blood and tears, has the malignant dwarf succeeded even in destroying! A man must be more than ordinarily at the mercy of political preconceptions, if, in reflecting on the forces which will mould the intellectual and emotional environment of the children born this year in different European countries, he fails to be impressed by the predominance among them of influences which no country can claim as exclusively its own. *'Chacun a deux patries, la sienne et la France'*—that saying is true, but it is not the whole truth. The testators are more numerous than it suggests; the estate is richer.

The reason is not far to seek. It is a matter, not of sentiment or choice, but of historical fact, which the interests and ambitions of particular generations are impotent to alter. The societies composing Europe are in varying degrees the heirs of the first great age of western civilization; nor was the partnership dissolved when that age was wound up. Greek philosophy and literature; Roman law; the long adventure of Christian missionaries; the medieval Church; feudalism; the Renaissance; the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; the Revolution—all these, and much else, have directly or indirectly set their stamp on all. Different countries have reacted differently to the great crises of European history; but all have reacted to them. Their religion, their literature and art, their science, their economic systems are a cosmopolitan creation, to which all have contributed

and all are in debt. Such things, it is true, do not in themselves create unity, but they create the conditions of it. They cause Europe, amid all its feverish jealousies and terrors, to be a single civilization, as a contentious family is still a family, and a bad State remains a State. They make its culture one, its crimes domestic tragedies, its wars civil wars. European political thought reflects, at its best, that common experience. Its methods and conclusions bear the mark of national idiosyncrasies; but its premises have hitherto been the property of all western peoples. Individual eccentricities and aberrations apart, it has addressed itself in different dialects to themes of equal concern to all.

How diverse those dialects are is apparent from these pages. The examples are numberless. Every one must have been impressed by the influence exercised on the political psychologies of different peoples by the varying circumstances in which they became nations. The idea of national unity is naturally laboured most by the thinkers of those countries which have known least of the fact. If in Germany, for example, it finds expression to-day in a fever of self-adulation, the explanation is partly, no doubt, the humiliations and injustices inflicted on Germans at the close of the last War; but it is partly, also, as Mr Mayer suggests, that the sentiments which that idea evokes were so long balked of satisfaction. If leading Germans interpret unity in half-tribal terms of race and blood—if they conceive of it as consisting, not in a community of culture or in political homogeneity, but in the mere physical attributes of a human herd—the chief reason is the same. It is that there is little in German history to remind them that there are loftier planes on which unity can be achieved.

The action and reaction between national idiosyncrasies and systems of government is equally striking. In the world as a whole, the majority of peoples of European origin still adhere to one form or another of political democracy. In Europe itself, if responsible government and a reasonably wide franchise be regarded as its essential features, then in no country where democracy has been overthrown had it existed for half a century, and in no country where it had existed for half a century has it as yet been overthrown. Democracy, however, is an institution

which depends for its significance, not merely on political machinery, but on the forces which set the machinery in motion and the spirit which informs it. It is a genus with several different species. Since not all versions of democracy have an equal survival-value, the importance of these differences has been heightened by the attack now launched upon it.

If, in America, democracy owes much to the severance of the British connection, it owes more to the pioneer, and to the society which, as he conquered the wilderness, the pioneer created. In France its economic foundation has been the land-settlement of the Revolution; its spiritual basis the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and the immortal legend of '93. In England, where the old régime did not fall with a crash—if, indeed, it fell at all—and where capitalism flowed into the *cadre* prepared by it, such democracy as has developed has been a stratified democracy, which to some French and American observers seems hardly to deserve the name. The fruit less of hardly won victories than of timely concessions, it exists as a mechanism, but has still to become either a habit or a creed. It struggles for breath in an atmosphere more sodden with a servile respect for money and position than exists in any other country of western Europe. Like the British army, it holds its trenches to the last man; but it is slow to manœuvre, lacks *élan* in attack, and waits for openings to be made for it, instead of making them for itself. It is strong to prevent, but weak to compel. Its rôle hitherto, as Mr Crossman remarks, has been that of a check on misgovernment, not of an organ through which common men themselves exercise initiative. But the varying characters impressed on the common elements in European civilization by the different historical settings in which they occur are among the themes of the pages which follow, and it is needless to labour them. The relations between churches and states; economic systems; educational policies, all illustrate the same point.

If, therefore, there is a Europe which is more than a mere phrase, the method followed in this book is the only method possible. It is not to blink the harsh reality of historical divisions, but to attempt to understand it. It is to seek, amid the national varieties, the traces of a common pattern, and to remind

the reader that it is that pattern, not less than the varieties, which makes nations what they are. In itself—though that truth is to-day difficult to appreciate—the existence of political and cultural diversities is a phenomenon to be welcomed, as a source of light and strength. They reveal and develop possibilities in human nature which, but for them, would have been unknown. The economic precocity of Europe is partly due to its possession throughout its history of numerous independent centres of energy, which fertilized each other by rivalry, imitation, and actual migration; so that Italy, Spain, and Portugal, France, Holland, and England—not to mention, at a later date, Germany and the United States—became in turn its economic schoolmasters. The same truth holds good on more important planes of life. Significant political discoveries and great cultural advances are not common achievements. Their occurrence is favoured by the existence of environments sufficiently various to pose different problems and prompt novel experiments.

From the close of the Middle Ages these diversities gather way, and seem destined, at times, to carry all before them. Some spheres of life are slower than others to be affected by them; scholarship in the age of Milton, and natural science in that which saw the birth of the Royal Society, are still predominantly supernatural. Political thought, however, flows increasingly, not in one broad bed, but in national channels. The rivulets meet; but each carries into the other something of the colour of the soil through which it has run. There is an age when the dominant influence is English; another when it is French; a third in which the masters who for a time set the fashion in academic speculation are abstruse Germans. Thus the spiritual heritage of Europe is, to use a metaphor, not unitary, but federal. Its common elements, before fusing, have been passed through different media, and the smallest communities have not lagged behind the greatest in their contributions to it. The debt of mankind to cities not one-twentieth of the size of London, and to countries less populous than an English rural county, is too obvious to require emphasis.

All advantages must be bought at a price. The price paid by Europe for a political system which is heterogeneous, not

uniform, has in the past been heavy, and in the future may be crushing. It has been the recurrent breakdowns—four immense and prolonged disasters, not to mention minor conflicts, in the course of three centuries—which leaves the student aghast at the vitality of the organism which, though stricken, has survived them. Whether, in fact, Europe has survived the last, which reached its first crisis a quarter of a century ago, and now, after an interval of quiescence, seems to be moving towards another, is still uncertain. The issue which is permanent can be simply stated. The values which make European culture do not radiate from a single centre. However super-national, they have their roots in national soils. They derive part of their quality from the characteristics of distinct peoples, varying in experience, needs, ideals, and ambitions. The problem is to protect both the common values and the national individualities which are their vehicle, by preventing attempts at a forced and artificial unity from crushing the diversities, and the diversities from degenerating into an anarchy which—since it leaves the weak at the mercy of the strong—leads by a longer road to the same ruinous end.

That problem is complicated to-day by the morbid psychologies which are the legacy of the last War; the fears and ambitions of tyrants, who need victories abroad to purchase peace at home; conflicts, real or imaginary, of economic interest, and half-insane ideologies masquerading as revelations. In essentials, nevertheless, it remains what it was. When the fevers of the moment have run their course, it will still cry for solution, and will continue, if ignored, to produce recurrent explosions. The symbol of order within nations, and of anarchy between them, the National State, which knows no superior, is crowned with great achievements, as well as stained with fearful crimes. But the conditions in which to-day it wields its immense powers, with Moscow and New York nearer London in time than was the Edinburgh of Scott, differ profoundly from those in which it grew to maturity. Like other political institutions, it is to be judged by its practical utility in a particular environment; and the ruin which results when it acts on the full logic of its pretensions is a warning that, as a method of organizing the world, it has played its part. The task of the future is to bury once for all the

monstrous doctrine of national sovereignty, which, in 1919, was preserved by loving hands, like some rare and fragrant flower, but whose principle is murder. It is to attempt, whether the technique and terminology employed be those of the League or of some more closely-knit structure, to lay the foundations of a European federal system.

Both terms in the problem find their place in this book. In its opening chapters on Greece, Rome, and medieval Christendom it explores the high table-land, where all rivers have their source. It does justice to the varying contributions to political wisdom—sometimes, also, to its opposite—made by thinkers of different nations; nor does it seek to make the crooked straight at the cost of fidelity to facts, by minimizing divergences which, to be overcome, must first be faced. But the ideas whose development it traces transcend national frontiers. The point which it underlines is the common language, not the provincial *patois*.

There is a political morality which is in the nature of things, since it has its source in the facts of human life. The agreement between European thinkers, whatever their nationality, as to its tenor and content appears to the authors of these pages more significant than the differences. That agreement, they suggest, supplies a standard by which the ambitions and policies of particular States may properly be judged. In so far as a European conscience exists, some of them should be welcomed by it, and some regarded as indifferent. Some are morbid aberrations, which ought to be condemned. The remedy to apply to them is that generally appropriate to a pathological condition, whether in individuals or in nations. It is, in the first instance, not forcible repression, but a sympathetic consideration of the facts which have produced them, together with a readiness to make sacrifices to remove their causes, when justice requires, as often it does, that sacrifices shall be made. There are circumstances, nevertheless, in which, if deaf to reason and unmoved by just treatment, these truculent neuroses ought to be resisted.

A criterion to distinguish the last from the two first, if difficult to apply, is not difficult to state. A man of sense and public spirit accepts and appreciates those peculiarities of a colleague which do not thwart the performance of the common task,



without thereby feeling bound to applaud his follies, or, if his propensities become criminal, to hold a candle to his crimes. A sensible and public-spirited nation will endeavour to observe the same rule. To say that, in the case of nations, the common task is civilization is too vague to be helpful, though it is proper to remember that it is to a cause more general than the interests of any single state that the first allegiance of mankind is due. It would be surprising, nevertheless, if no requirements could be stated with which political systems, to meet men's needs, must comply.

Political thinkers have attempted to formulate them. The rule of law; the rights of man; the greatest happiness of the greatest number; governments servants, not masters; freedom of speech and thought; tolerance; equality and the abolition of economic privilege, are a few of the rubrics they have employed for the purpose. All may be reduced to one—the Christian doctrine that institutions exist for men, not men for institutions. That doctrine asserts that religious observances, political systems, forms of economic organization, property rights—the whole fabric and structure of organized society—are provisional arrangements, which are to be preserved when they assist the liberation of the human spirit, and abolished when they impede it. The powers of this world, Christian and pagan alike, have frequently regarded it as both foolish and wicked, and have punished its practitioners with torture and death. Almost everything that is admirable, however, in the public life of European nations, and, in particular, the capacity they have shown for periodical rejuvenation, is due to the temper which that principle has fostered. It is the salt in the heap, the leaven in the lump.

It is true that, whatever its ostensible creed, no society lives up to it. It is one thing, however, to accept a system of ideas which gives these values a high place, while failing to act with consistency upon it. It is quite another to affirm that they are poison, not food, and to fall prostrate before a counter-system which makes an idol of their opposites. Man is condemned to live in twilight; but darkness is darkness, and light is light. What matters is the direction in which his face is set. When slavery is a powerful vested interest, established in a society which pays lip-service to freedom, it is shocking, but not fatal. When

it is declared to be, not merely a regrettable necessity, but a loftier form of civilization, the springs of political morality are poisoned at the source. It is of the nature of states, as of men, to yield to the temptation to oppress, rob, and murder. It is not the mere commission of these crimes which is the symptom of the approach of spiritual death; it is the assertion that, when committed for the advantage of the British Empire, the Nordic Race, the Catholic Church, or the International Proletariat, they are not crimes, but virtues. In the collective affairs of mankind, bad doctrines are always and everywhere more deadly than bad actions. The latter are the sins of the wicked, the former of the good. The latter destroy life; the former make it not worth while to live. In that sense, knowledge is virtue, and the Scriptural admonition, 'Fear not them that kill the body, but them that kill the soul,' is profound political wisdom.

In the age which Professor Whitehead has named the century of genius, the genius best entitled to be called universal was Leibniz. His passion was knowledge; mathematics, philosophy, history, jurisprudence all owe something to his work. But he had been born amid the ruins left by one welter of great wars, and lived through another. He threw himself into plans for the organization of peace, and—what then seemed its necessary condition—the reunion of the churches. In the midst of it all he wrote some sentences which, when first read, cause surprise: 'By so shameful a submission men's minds will be progressively intimidated and crushed, till they become at last incapable of all feeling. Inured to ill treatment, and habituated to bear it patiently, they will end by regarding it as a fatality which they can do nothing but endure. All will go together down the broad high road to slavery.' No practical morals are suggested for to-day; the world has changed too much. It is true, however, that, now as then, mankind tends to be shocked by what is unusual, not by what is shocking. It is true, as Leibniz remarks, that the continued spectacle of atrocious actions, and the incessant preaching of atrocious doctrines, insensibly weakens the repugnance felt for both, even in minds which till recently regarded them with horror.

Till yesterday, the high road to slavery seemed in Europe

closed; to-day it lies wide open. Few would choose it, save the very mean, knowing clearly where it leads, merely from alarm at the menaces launched against those who take another. The danger confronting the societies which still reject it is less obvious and more subtle. It springs from within, not from without. It is not, as is sometimes suggested, that democracies, of their very nature, cannot act with decision; for democracies, like other States, can create strong executives, when such are required, nor do they cease to be democracies because they take that step. It is that no State can act with decision in the absence of premisses generally accepted and firmly held, whether their acceptance is the result of reason or of force.

When political power is confined to a single small class, whose members receive much the same education as a preparation for lives of much the same kind, such premisses hardly require to be created. They establish themselves, as the result less of argument than of a common body of experience; and, in fact, in the narrow ruling circles which alone needed to be considered, they existed in most countries of Europe in a not distant past. Given the abolition of property rights enabling those who own them to exploit those who do not, and the disappearance, as a consequence, of capricious inequalities of income and circumstance, such premisses may exist in the future, as the common possession of all civilized men. In the capitalist societies of to-day they are feeble or absent. Violent contrasts, not only of income, but of environment and opportunity, make the different strata composing such societies unintelligible to each other; while, in England, in particular, the educational system still continues to be so organized as to heighten and perpetuate the discords arising from economic divisions. Nations reap in storm what they sow in calm. It is not surprising, therefore, that when a crisis occurs, different classes within them should differ sharply in their reactions to it.

The privileged orders in western Europe may feel little enthusiasm for the crude barbarities of the Fascist states; but, though individuals among them take a saner and more generous view, their collective attitude is that of men who prize property above freedom, and fear the triumph of the dictators less than they fear

socialism. To the mass of the population the ways of Fascism are odious; but the conduct of their rulers inspires them with little confidence that the latter share their horror. The weakness of contemporary democracy, in short, is not that it is democracy, but that too often it is democracy in form, and plutocracy in fact. Only a faith can prevail against a faith; and faith is the attribute, not of states, but of the individuals composing them. The greatest asset of democracy should be the sense of human dignity; felt by common men, and the devotion to freedom and equality which that feeling inspires. But no oligarchy of property-owners—indeed, as some recent examples suggest, no oligarchy of any kind—dare appeal to such sentiments; once aroused and on their mettle, who can say where they will stop? The dictators, on their side, are not unaware of the spectres which haunt the pillows of rich men; they work them hard, as trusty allies. Thus to-day, as in the wars of the French Revolution and the Thirty Years War, divisions of interest and creed within states increasingly determine the relations between them. The international question becomes part of the social question. France must face the possibility of a third frontier to defend, because that result seems less obnoxious to the French Right than does a victory of the French Left. The paralysis of British policy from China to Spain, and the loss of moral influence which that paralysis has involved, have more than one cause. But they are partly the price paid for maintaining too long the economic foundations of the British class-system.

Of a balance of forces so precarious only one thing need be said: it is unlikely to last. For the reasons suggested in the familiar Scriptural aphorism, two major departments of life cannot permanently be conducted on contradictory principles. The equality of civil and political rights, which is of the essence of democracy, is not easily reconciled with the violent inequalities of social condition and economic power, which, to judge by experience, are of the essence of capitalism. A society so organized may for a time appear stable; but the strains become at last intolerable, and the attempt breaks down. That moment now appears to be not remote. Either democracy, it may be prophesied, will extend its authority from the political to the

economic system, and be established more firmly, because on broader foundations; or it will cease to exist, save in form, as a political institution. In Scandinavia and the British Dominions, present tendencies point to the first alternative being followed. Fascist Europe has not only established the second, but has made it a state religion, with an inquisition to enforce it. In Great Britain, France, and the United States, the issue remains in doubt. In Russia, which has known no democracy, it has hardly yet arisen.

With questions of that order this book is not concerned. But the lamp of the historian should cast light forward as well as back; nor are the fashions of a single generation the last word in wisdom. It is proper to remember, in reflecting on such topics, that Europe is not without some experience, to which its thinkers have given form. The reader of these pages must decide for himself the direction in which that experience points.

R. H. TAWNEY.

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## PRELIMINARY NOTE<sup>1</sup>

*Quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox futura trahantur.*

THE present work is not a history of political theories, of which a number of very useful ones already exists. Well-known books like Dunning's *Political Theories*, Professor Sabine's recent book on the *History of Political Theory*, or the various volumes in the Home University Library, of which we should like to mention in particular Professor Gooch's *Political Thought in England from Bacon to Halifax* and Professor Laski's *Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham*—these are not to be supplemented by a new book with similar aims. The student who wants information about the history of political thought will still have to turn to these or similar works.

Our intention is different: our endeavour is to portray the interweaving and continuous operation of the main decisive European political ideas. This European tradition, dating from the Greeks' discovery of the *polis* and reason in the modern sense, is, or at least should be, present in all essential political decisions of to-day.

Basic political ideas naturally do not arise *in vacuo*. Man as *zoon politikon* has to regulate his relationship to the world in an infinite variety of ways. And in the course of European history it is not always in the political sphere that the basic attitude of an epoch can be most clearly recognized. Philosophy, morals, religious attitudes, economy, science, literature and art, political action and political theory in their mutual interaction which is so difficult to describe in general terms, must be drawn into our study if we want to determine with any degree of accuracy the basic European attitudes which govern our present epoch.

<sup>1</sup> *Political Thought: the European Tradition*, including the Introduction, was completed before the end of July 1938. The reader must decide whether its treatment of the subject is confirmed or refuted by events since that date.

The task we have set ourselves is not an historical or sociological one in the specialized sense. In order to undertake a specialized historical or sociological treatment of our subject a whole lifetime, even with the co-operation of a number of investigators, would probably be insufficient to-day. Furthermore, the general approach to the problem in modern sociology is still in its preliminary stages, despite noteworthy beginnings of a universalistic synthetic sociology, as in Karl Mannheim's further development of the work of Max Weber. Our effort might rather be characterized as a political-pedagogical tract, in which the reader will be made acquainted with those European facts, ideas, and tendencies which are still operative, and with the manner in which we have to take our place in a European 'unity.' We have, however, intentionally avoided calling this work a provisional sketch of a philosophy of history, although it is admitted that certain of our hypotheses and aims have a bearing on the philosophy of history. One certainly cannot speak of lasting European political ideas without being convinced of a certain unity in the history of the western world and of its inner dynamics. But even an outline of a philosophy of history requires an intensive study of details and of their position in a wider context of events, and the question arises whether a well-founded philosophy of history is possible or has any meaning in the uncertainty of the present day; in other words, whether the subject of the investigation, namely the unity and meaning of 'Europeanism,' would still remain on completion of the work.

Varying a well-known statement of the great German historian, Leopold von Ranke, one might say: every generation has an immediate relationship to history. The present work is intended to show this relationship, as it were, in process—for we believe that the prospect of fruitfully transmitting the present European tradition and purposive adjustment of present society to a succeeding generation still remains, despite the destructive forces at work.

European man has continually endeavoured to determine his place in history. But none of these endeavours are able to make any final pronouncements on the relationship of man to the

historical world, because the historical world always proceeds beyond the answer given at any particular time. The historical world is never a completed entity, it is always a process of change, a series of events, in which the questioner may play his greater or lesser part. Nevertheless we know, or believe we know, that this process of historical change, in which we ourselves live, has a meaning, however difficult it may be to express this meaning or this tendency without falling a prey to quite inadequate and empty generalizations.

Many thinkers, seeking to fathom the meaning of history, have tried to substantiate hypotheses which they themselves have contrived or in which they believed. Thus Hegel compressed the course of history into a formula of a progress of the consciousness of freedom. One may doubt whether the philosophy of history can ever proceed beyond such a bold generalization to a *coherent* system with a definite content. The effort which we are here making has in any case nothing in common with Hegel's attempt at a philosophical interpretation of the historical process.

The present work is based on the assumption that elements of European tradition are present in all important and decisive political attitudes of the European; an attempt is made to describe the inner connection and the stratification of these elements or principles of tradition. The main problem is all the time definitely a European one. Indians, Japanese, and Chinese live in another world—at least up to now.

What do we mean when we say that traditional elements govern our present conduct in the historical world? We shall try to answer this as concretely as possible. Since the Greeks discovered the *polis*, the practice of the Greek city State and the knowledge of this practice, which the Greeks were the first to study and bring to fruition, has never been lost. And one can say further that, so long as the concept *European* has any meaning, the experiences of the Greek *polis* and its instrument, reason, can never be lost. The idea of world empire has been present in European political consciousness ever since the crusades of Alexander the Great brought the Orient and Hellenism into contact. The Roman Empire combined Alexander's

idea of a world empire with the keen dispassionateness of Roman Law. Further, since the great thinkers of the Middle Ages brought about a reconciliation between the claims of the next world, advanced by the Christian Church, and the requirements of this world in its totality, the medieval idea of a cultural unity has been ever present in the mind of the European. When the Christian medieval *oikoumene* broke up—the reasons for this will be explained later—and a new world order had to be constructed, the thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries always felt both the Platonic philosophy of the state and the universality of the medieval ideals of epistemology and of life to be the stimuli and the assumption of their work, and in Grotius's philosophy of the law of nations can be clearly perceived the lasting element in the post-Alexandrian idea of a world empire, which can claim to be still operative to-day in the conception of the League of Nations.

From the womb of the medieval world national states slowly become differentiated. In attraction and repulsion, in alliances and in wars they unfold their principles: new European elements. Thus arise forms and qualities which we might term the English, the French, the German, the Italian, the American, the Russian principles in the western world. None of these elements can be separated off from the European unity without the disappearance of the idea of Europe itself. This is in fact a basic hypothesis of our work.

We are well aware of the wide implications of these remarks. It is the task of the following pages to condense and concrete the European principles and elements, to which we have so far only vaguely referred. While disclaiming acceptance of the assumptions of Hegelian philosophy, our intention may be summarized by some well-known words of Hegel: 'The elements which the spirit appears to have behind it in its past history, it also has in its present depth.' The elements of the spirit with which we are concerned are the basic structures of the epochs through which the European has passed. These basic structures cannot be understood through isolated analyses of particular epochs, but only by constantly relating them back to their historical derivation and forward to what is still present

to-day—latent or overt. This two-sided relationship is at the same time a criterion of what is dealt with in our present work. Every critical reader will find it easy to supplement the material which we present. We have aimed not at completeness but solely at providing a synthetic view of some of the basic structures.

We have yet to explain what is meant by the decisive political attitudes into which the European traditional principles enter. Political is here used neither in the sense of day-to-day politics nor of party politics; rather in the sense of the *polis*, in which no private and isolated existence of individuals was recognized. Modern life is certainly more diversified than was the Greek. But when we examine its essential structure we recognize that we might neglect the cinema, the detective story, etc., but not the question of man in his relationship to the State, of the meaning of his life, of his position in relation to history, science, economy, art, morals, and religion. All epochs raise questions concerning these relationships. And it is of this aspect that we are here writing. The busy politician and the equally busy journalist may have something to refer to here, when they take a stand for or against the League of Nations; the young student, who memorizes the political theories of the great European jurists, may learn to see the problems of the unity and continuity of the west, which extend beyond the limited compass of the lecture-room. In this sense we can also call our effort a political-pedagogical tract, an inquiry into the history of the European tradition of Political Thought.





## CHAPTER I

### THE GREEK IDEA OF THE STATE AND THE STRUCTURE OF WESTERN RATIONALISM

ALTHOUGH the history of the influence of the Greek mind still remains unwritten, one thing may be affirmed with certainty: the categories of European thought and approach to the understanding of life have been permanently moulded by the Greeks from the very beginning. So long as the European continues in his endeavour to know the historical world, it is modern adaptations of Greek ideas and concepts which make this knowledge at all possible. The Greeks discovered the world of European man and gave it a permanent character. 'We shall never be rid of antiquity unless or until we become barbarians again.' In these words Jacob Burckhardt, one of the profoundest scholars of the Greek world, has summed up our relation to the ancient Greeks.

We are still far from being able to answer the question why it was just the ancient Greek world that formulated the fundamental categories of western philosophical and political thought; an answer to this question would involve a comprehensive analysis of the structure of Greek thought and a complete history of the influence of the Greek mind. We cannot yet envisage either of these, although work upon them is in progress in many quarters. It is sufficient for the purpose of this essay to start from the premiss that it is in fact in the ancient Greek world that the *a priori* of the European conception of the world has been determined.

It would again be going beyond the limits imposed on our essay to give an account of the historical genesis of Greek antiquity. Egyptian, Persian, and Indian cultural influences were absorbed into the Greek world from very early times. It would be a task in itself to follow up the several factors and trace them out analytically.

In the cities of Ionia, on the narrow coastal strip of Asia Minor where east and west jostle each other, lies the home of the Homeric epic; the first thinker whose name has come down to us in the history of Greek philosophy—Thales of Miletus—was also an Ionian. As early as the seventh century B.C. Ionian seafarers had reached south Russia and had traversed the straits of Gibraltar. From Ionia the early Greek culture penetrated westwards into Greece proper. Here arose the classical culture of Greek antiquity.

It is beyond the purpose of our inquiry to investigate the several historical stages of this culture; we are concerned only with that form of the Greek world in which it found its ripest expression, for it is Greek culture of the late period which moulded the west. That period, extending from the fifth to the fourth century, is manifest in the consciousness of western man. Its political leaders are Pericles and Alexander the Great, its thinkers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, its historian Thucydides, its poet Euripides.

In these two centuries was forged the intellectual armour to which we shall always have recourse so long as western man inquires into the foundations of his existence, so long as he does not subside into the history-less condition of the fellahin. These two centuries characterize the classical world of Greek antiquity.

But one can understand this period only if one bears in mind the fact that the religious and mythical forces of the Greek world are still potent in Greek classicism; that indeed one of the most important characteristics of these centuries is precisely the continual compromise with the world of myth. This is one of the things with which we shall have to deal. Nevertheless it is important to stress the point now, that no people in European history has had such an active concern with myth as the Greeks: ' . . . myth powerfully dominated Greek life, hovered over it, an intimate, wonderful phenomenon. It illuminated the whole of Greek actuality, in all things and up to late times, like a not-so-distant past, since it really represented the thoughts and doings of the nation itself in a higher form. . . . Myth is a universal premiss of Greek existence. The whole culture, all that it did

and did not achieve in its gradual development, was at one with its origin. The Greeks were aware of a mythical or holy origin of their several forms of life and felt themselves very close to it. The whole race considered itself the heir and lawful successor of the heroic period. . . . Herodotus begins his account of the great struggle of east and west with the abduction of Io, and the Persian War is a continuation of the Trojan.' <sup>1</sup> Even Alexander, the pupil of Aristotle, the keenest mind that Greece produced, lived under a sense of his heroic and divine ancestry.

And yet we rightly characterize the fifth and fourth centuries as an epoch of the late period. This is perhaps most clearly revealed by the economic condition of the Greek city states, especially that of Athens, in the fifth century. Greek economic history has been divided into three periods: the first extends from the fifteenth to the ninth century, from the peak of the Mycenaean culture to the appearance of the Homeric saga. It is the period when dynastic kings ruled from mighty royal citadels. Cattle-breeding, hunting, war, and banditry were the occupations of the freemen. Only gradually came the transition to agriculture and handicraft. Both these were considered unworthy of the freeman in the early period. Through the Phoenicians the Mycenaean culture came into contact with Egypt. Domestic animals and cultivated crops were introduced into Greece, metal-working became the chief handicraft. Increase of population, trade, and seafaring led to inequality of property. The greater part of the land passed into the hands of the nobility.

The period of aristocratic domination began. It extended to about the sixth century. But the continued expansion of the population in conjunction with the limited area of Greek territory destroyed the character of the *oikos* of these centuries. Greek economy entered its third period, becoming mainly a trade and money economy.

The victory of the Athenians over the Persians was the gateway of a new epoch in which Athens became the economic and intellectual centre of the Greek world. Xenophon has clearly indicated this new tendency in Greek economic life: 'Whatever

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, vol. i, pp. 31, 35.

pleasant things there are in Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the Peloponnese, or anywhere else, were all brought together here [i.e. in Athens] through the mastery of the sea.' We know that in the age of Pericles the majority of the Athenians lived by commerce and handicraft. The growth of the slave trade resulted in a profound change in working conditions. In Attica, according to the cautious calculations of Beloch, there were 75,000 slaves to 100,000 inhabitants. A money economy arose, based upon specialization and production for the market.

This new urban *bourgeoisie*, together with an impoverished and exploited peasantry, overthrew the aristocratic regime. All the free inhabitants of Attica became Athenian citizens. Thus democracy appeared in Athens.

### 1. THE EXAMPLE OF ATHENS

The money economy dissolved the old Greek order. The individual became the measure of all things, as the sophist Protagoras expressed it. The period of knowledge of truth for truth's sake gave place to that of knowledge for the sake of gain—which could be acquired by purchase; the sophists no longer preached trade for the sake of good, but trade for the purpose of power. Social disintegration, the struggle of factions, threatened to dissolve completely the political spirit of the Greek city State which had still inspired Athens in the Persian wars. Constitutional experiment followed upon constitutional experiment: democracy was replaced by the tyranny of wealthy oligarchs; in its turn, democracy succeeded to the rule of tyranny: where was there to be a halt in the rapid ups and downs of the political and social crisis which had shaken the life of the Greek *polis* to its foundations?

No one has described the crisis of Greek life more clearly and with less illusion than Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. There he says:

'Revolution thus ran its course from city to city, and the places where it arrived latest, having heard what had been done before, carried to a still greater excess the refinement of their

inventions, as manifested in the cunning of their enterprises and the atrocity of their reprisals. Words were made to change their ordinary meanings and to take on newly imposed ones. Reckless audacity was held to be courage in a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question, inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence became the attribute of manliness. . . . Blood became a weaker tie than party from the superior readiness of those united by the latter to dare everything without reserve; for such associations had not in view the blessings derivable from established institutions but were formed by ambition for their overthrow; and the confidence of their members in each other rested less on any religious sanction than upon complicity in crime.’<sup>1</sup>

Immediately upon this, the great historian examines the causes which gave rise to this state of affairs:

‘The cause of all these evils was the lust for power arising from greed and ambition; and from these passions proceeded the violence of parties once engaged in contention. The leaders in the cities, each provided with the fairest professions, on the one side with the cry of political equality of the people, on the other of a moderate aristocracy, sought prizes for themselves in those public interests which they pretended to cherish, and, recoiling from nothing in their struggles for ascendancy, engaged in the direst excesses; in their acts of vengeance they went to even greater lengths, not stopping at what justice or the good of the State demanded, but making the party caprice of the moment their only standard. . . . Thus religion was in honour with neither party; but the use of fair phrases to arrive at guilty ends was in high reputation. Meanwhile the moderate part of the citizens perished between the two, either for not joining in the quarrel, or because envy would not suffer them to escape.

‘Thus every form of iniquity took root in the Hellenic countries by reason of the troubles. The ancient simplicity into which honour so largely entered was laughed down and disappeared; and society became divided into camps in which no man trusted

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Everyman ed., pp. 224 ff.

his fellow. To put an end to this, there was neither promise to be depended upon, nor oath that could command respect; but all parties, dwelling rather in their calculation upon the hopelessness of any permanent state of things, were more intent upon self-defence than capable of confidence. In this contest the blunter wits were the most successful. Apprehensive of their own deficiencies and of the cleverness of their antagonists, they feared to be worsted in debate and to be surprised by the combinations of their more versatile opponents, and so at once boldly had recourse to action: while their adversaries, arrogantly thinking that they should know in time, and that it was unnecessary to secure by action what policy might afford, often fell victims to their want of precaution.'

If we consider this passage carefully, we shall realize that it contains more than a mere description of the crisis of the time. Thucydides wrote the history of his time in order to discover its *general* structure. The science of history, which made its appearance for the first time in his work, should point out to man the path of proper political action; this is possible to Thucydides because he is convinced that men are made fundamentally alike. Only for that reason are the destinies of men and peoples repeated. It is Thucydides who first formulated the cyclical trend in human history:

'The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time.'<sup>1</sup>

The contradictions of war and justice, of might and right, will ever reappear, as long as men make and experience history. Thucydides has given an unforgettable description of this paradox in his account of the negotiations of the Athenian envoys with the Melians. We can only quote a few extracts here:

'Since you know as well as we do,' say the Athenians to the Melian envoys, 'that right, as the world goes, is only in question

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.' <sup>1</sup>

And further:

'When you speak of the favour of the gods, we [i.e. the Athenians] may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practise amongst themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do.' <sup>2</sup>

One must surely be reminded by these passages of Machiavelli. With him, too, the writing of history was inspired by the idea of the predetermination of political conduct. One might, further, call to mind Thomas Hobbes, who translated the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and who explicitly stated that the importance of the work was 'to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future.' Hobbes's appreciation of Thucydides is doubtless attributable to a deep congeniality of spirit: 'Thucydides though he never digress to read a lecture, moral or political, upon his own text . . . is yet accounted the most politic historiographer that ever writ.' <sup>3</sup> The common ground in the historical thinking of Thucydides, of Machiavelli, and of Thomas Hobbes lies chiefly in the fact that historical knowledge is concerned with general developments. In this Thucydides is a true representative of the Greek spirit. And that this trend of his historical thought took on new life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is an important indication of the continued influence of the Greek mind in the history of the west.

The central figure of Thucydides' work is Pericles. The

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Introduction to my German edition of *Leviathan*, Zurich 1936, p. 11 f.



latter is for him the model statesman who by his talent for leadership was able to curb extremes of party. In the speeches which Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles, Athens is called 'the school of Hellas.' The State of Pericles becomes the ideal State for Thucydides the historian. In his masterly study of Thucydides as a political thinker, Werner Jäger describes the Thucydidean ideal State as follows: 'The later philosophical theory of the mixed constitution as the conceivably best form of the State is here anticipated by Thucydides. Athenian "democracy" is for him not the realization of that outward mechanical equality which some praise extravagantly as the height of justice and which others condemn as the opposite. This has already been demonstrated by his definition of Pericles as a veritable ruling "first man." The statement made there, that Athens under his rule had been a "democracy in name only," takes, in the funeral oration in the mouth of the "first man" himself, this general form: in Athens every one is equal before the law, yet in political life the aristocracy of excellence rules. This implies the principle that an individual of outstanding talent must be recognized as having priority. This conception admits that the political activity of the individual has a value for the whole. But at the same time it takes cognizance of the fact . . . that the people as such cannot exercise dominion over a kingdom that is so large and so difficult to direct. The problem of the relationship of the superior individual to the political community, which was becoming acute precisely because of a state of "freedom and equality" (i.e. of the masses), is happily solved for Thucydides in the Athens of Pericles. Both as a constitutional, political structure and as an economic and cultural entity, the State is a kind of Heraclitean harmony of fundamental contrasts made necessary by nature, and its existence depends upon their mutual tension and equilibrium. The elastic contrasts of home production and enjoyment of the products of the whole world, of work and recreation, business and pleasure, mind and ethics, thought and deed, appear in the Periclean State in an ideally balanced interplay.'<sup>1</sup> Thus the historian

<sup>1</sup> 'Thukydides als politischer Denker,' in *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, vol. I, pp. 479 ff.

Thucydides saw the mixed constitution realized in the State of Pericles (we must indeed bear in mind at this point that the 'constitution' in the Greek sense embraces the whole life of the *polis*), and this was a discovery of great consequence for the history of political theory. It was taken over by Polybius and handed on by him to Cicero. From Cicero the idea passed on to St Thomas Aquinas with the addition, it is true, of ideas taken from the *Politics* of Aristotle, which we shall have to discuss later. And from Aquinas the idea of the mixed constitution, as constitutional actuality, made its way to Machiavelli, and in the nineteenth century we find de Tocqueville influenced by it. Wherever 'freedom and equality' are striven for as the formal fundamental privileges of the mass-state—as in England, France, and America at the present day—these principles must be counterbalanced by the *political* aristocracy of excellence, as represented by the model afforded by the figure of Pericles. This is the lasting doctrine which Thucydides has bequeathed to western political thought.

The process of the increase in the subjectivity of men and of the rationalization of the Greek world is revealed in the development of Greek tragedy. The works of Aeschylus were still rooted in the belief in a fixed and just divine order in the world. In his works man as such had not yet become a *problem*. He was still the bearer of a destiny whose conflict with the divine order resulted in the fundamental tragic conflict. Not until the tragedies of Euripides is man himself presented as a problematic figure. Subjectivity and rationalism are the hallmark of his age. His tragedies depict a process of the urbanization of the Greek world which becomes especially clear from a comparison with the Aeschylan drama. In the latter, myths are portrayed with wonderful impressiveness, but without yet being questioned as such; in Euripides, both they and the gods are subjected to sharp criticism. Thus, in *The Trojan Women* the conquest of Troy is presented as an example of Greek lust for power and conquest. This radically explodes the myth of the Nation. Moral reality, too, is described in a naturalistic way: 'Nothing proves more strongly the way all things are questioned in the consciousness of this generation,' writes Werner Jäger in

his excellent study on *Euripides und seine Zeit*,<sup>1</sup> 'than this dissolution of the whole of life and of the whole of tradition in discussion and philosophizing, in which persons of all ages, from king to servant, take part.' His poetical psychology became the exponent of the new subjective world and of the rational and naturalistic knowledge of reality which distinguish this epoch.

Thucydides was not the only Greek who worked up the experience of the Greek period of crisis into an explicit and outspokenly positive political doctrine. By his side stands his contemporary Socrates, whose life and influence became the symbol of the political philosopher, a symbol which not only had effect on his immediate pupils and followers like Plato and Aristotle, but became the absolute model and fundamental type of western philosophical thought. Thucydides, as Hobbes later quite rightly saw, avoided moralizing about political things: he showed them, as it were, in motion; Socrates went further by exhibiting 'the political' as included in a more comprehensive sphere. He not only described the confusion of moral ideas which we have encountered in Thucydides, he pursued also the deeper cause of this confusion, which for him was part of a fundamental crisis in Greek man. The way in which Socrates posed the problem was more comprehensive than that of the historian. He did not accept the historical facts without question, or inquire into their general significance; he dug their roots bare, as it were, in order to explain them by their origins and, if possible, transplant them into a newer and healthier soil. The records of antiquity have not preserved a single line of Socrates' for us. And yet his personality and the significance of his teaching have been kept alive for us in a rare manner, a fact solely due to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and the *Dialogues* of Plato. This is not the place to attempt to separate the 'real' Socrates from the Socrates of Xenophon or of Plato. Without entering into this controversy, it is quite possible to give an account of the main tendency of Socrates' thought.

Socrates made a clear enough distinction between himself and his contemporary thinkers, the Sophists, by calling himself a *philosopher*, that is, a man who was merely the friend of wisdom,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Paideia*, vol. i, pp. 419 ff.

knowing only that he knew nothing. By this, of course, the first step in the direction of true knowledge was made. This Socratic doctrine of the consciousness of ignorance has been revived again and again in western philosophy whenever philosophy has taken up fundamentally new positions: Cusanus conceived of his *Docta Ignorantia* in the fifteenth century in this spirit, and Descartes, in his *Discours de la Méthode* in the seventeenth century, was a Socratician in this especial sense, when philosophy was given a new foundation as against the scholastic tradition.

The historical achievement of Socrates has been recognized as lying in the discovery of the universal concept. It was no less a person than Aristotle who ascribed this to Socrates: 'for two things may be fairly ascribed to Socrates—inductive arguments and universal definition, both of which are concerned with the starting-point of science:—but Socrates did not make the universals or the definitions exist apart: *they* [i.e. Plato and his school], however, gave them separate existence, and this was the kind of thing they called Ideas.'<sup>1</sup> Aristotle distinguishes very clearly between Plato, whom he views as an exponent of the 'separate ideas,' and Socrates, to whom he ascribes the discovery of the universal concept. We shall deal with this distinction in due course. But first we must make clear to ourselves the achievement of Socrates. Socrates does not regard the substance of knowledge as a problem, but its *form*. Every carpenter for instance—so Socrates taught—is guided in his work by a pattern of a table which is valid for all the tables he will ever have to make. No one can dispute this. But, continues the philosopher, does this general concept, which is at the artisan's disposal in his work, also exist in other spheres of human life? Does the courageous man know what is courageous, does the just man know what is just, does the artist know what is beautiful? Only if we can succeed in making knowledge coincide with conduct is it possible to find a *permanent* norm of conduct; a knowledge having *no* relation to conduct, a knowledge for the sake of knowledge, appears pointless to this Greek philosopher concerned with the fate of the *polis*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Aristotle* vol. viii, *Metaphysica*, trans. W. D. Ross, Oxford 1928, 1078 b.

The thinker then traces all virtues to one fundamental moral law: namely the Good. In Plato's dialogue, the *Gorgias*, Socrates formulates the fundamental norm of the Good with express reference to that moral crisis of the time which we have already touched upon:

'But as it is, you see that you three, three of the wisest of the Greeks of our time, you and Polus and Gorgias, are unable to prove that we should lead any other life than this. . . . But amidst the multitude of questions that we have been arguing, whilst all the rest were refuted this doctrine alone stands unshaken, that doing wrong is to be more carefully avoided than suffering it; that before all things a man should study not to *seem* but to *be* good in his private and public life. . . . So take my advice and follow me to that bourn, where when you have attained it, you will be happy in life and after death. . . . And let any one look down upon you as a fool and insult you if he pleases—aye, by heaven, and cheerfully submit to endure from him even that blow of infamy: for it will do you no harm if you be really an honest and true man, practising virtue. And hereafter when we have so practised it together, then and not till then will we set about politics. . . . For it is a shame for men in the condition in which we now manifestly are to assume airs of consequence, though we are never of the same mind for two moments together upon the same subjects, and those of the deepest moment; such is the undisciplined state of our minds. Let us then take as a guide the views that have even now declared themselves to us, which point out that this course of life is best, in the practice of justice and of every other virtue to live and to die.'<sup>1</sup> Only the clear knowledge of virtue ensures good and just conduct.

The knowledge of the completely moral person is guided by an inner voice which Socrates calls his Divine Sign and which he has undoubtedly conceived of in a religious manner—that voice which shows man that his morality and with it his happiness are in danger if he conducts himself unjustly or is otherwise lacking in the virtues. This idea of the Divine Sign,

<sup>1</sup> *Gorgias*, trans. E. M. Cope, Cambridge 1864, Chap. LXXXIII, pp. 130-1.

though it was only negative, should have warned subsequent interpreters of Socratic philosophy that the Socratic juxtaposition of knowledge and virtue involved an intellectualist falsification of ethical phenomena. Hardly any misunderstanding has been more fraught with consequence in the history of the western mind. Only after Nietzsche was this intellectualism in the explanation of ethics overcome, Pascal having already distinguished 'logical order' (*ordre logique*) from 'logic of the heart' (*ordre du cœur*). Yet we are still to-day far removed from a coherent system of philosophical ethics. Thought amongst the Greeks was of a fundamentally different type from the thought of modern man. If Parmenides already taught that thinking and being were the same, then this doctrine continued the fundamental Greek idea that reality itself was 'logical' in its sensible order and intelligibility. Only thus can we understand Socrates' ability to hold the opinion that knowing the good and yet not doing it was a logical impossibility. The Platonic doctrine of *methexis*, the doctrine of the participation of being in the realm of the Ideas, also has its roots here.

A German student of Socratic thought, Julius Stenzel, has worked out in a most felicitous manner the deep connection between Socratic thought and the concrete reality of the Greek *polis*: The point of departure of the Socratic *logos* and its aim 'is the dialectical explanation, in the literal sense of the honestly conducted discussion based on truth, of the significance of the Good, the Beautiful, in fact of everything appertaining to the existence of man. This explanation is for Socrates naturally accompanied by readiness to defend at all times what he has said; conversely, the dialectical expression and explanation is founded on the living example of those who continually fulfil the meaning of the *polis* community.'<sup>1</sup> From Plato's *Apology* we can see how Socrates wanted to see the political meaning of his doctrine interpreted. When he was informed of his condemnation to death, this most modest of Athenians once again raised his voice, confident of the judgment of posterity, and answered his judges as follows:

'The penalty he fixes for me is, I understand, death. Very

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysik des Altertums*, Berlin 1931, p. 99 f.

good. And what am I going to fix in my turn, men of Athens? It must be, must it not, what I deserve? Well, then, what do I deserve to receive or pay because I chose not to sit quiet all my life, and turned aside from what most men care for—money-making and household affairs, leadership in war and public speaking, and all the offices and associations and factions of the State—thinking myself, as a matter of fact, too upright to be safe if I went into that life? So I held aloof from it all; I should have been of no use there to you or to myself, but I set about going in private to each individual man and doing him the greatest of all services—as I assert—trying to persuade every one of you not to think of what he had but rather of what he was, and how he might grow wise and good, nor consider what the city had, but what the city was, and so with everything else in the world.’<sup>1</sup> Therefore Socrates demands of his judges not the death sentence, but a place in the Prytaneum.

According to the import of his teachings, Socrates had rather suffer injustice than commit it. He rejected the possibility of flight which friends offered him. He placed the idea of the State, of the Greek *polis*, above the accident of his own person:

‘And are you to be allowed such rights against your fatherland and its laws? If we mean to kill you because we think it is just, must you do your best to kill us in your turn? Can you claim that you have a right to this, you, the lover of virtue? Is this your wisdom, not to know that above father and mother and forefathers stands our country, dearer and holier than they, more sacred, and held in more honour by God and men of understanding? That you ought to reverence her, and submit to her and work for her when she is in need, for your country more than for your father, and either win her consent or obey her will, suffer what she bids you suffer, and hold your peace; be it imprisonment or blows, or wounds in war or death—it must be borne, and it is right it should be borne.’<sup>2</sup>

The death of Socrates has served through the centuries as an example and proof of unity of philosophical thought and action.

<sup>1</sup> *The Apology*, in *Socratic Discourses*, Everyman ed., p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> *Crito*, *ibid.* p. 360.

## 2. THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

The life and death of Socrates set his pupil Plato the task of completing the work of the master, of showing the Athenian *polis* the path it should traverse in order to become a just State. How deeply Plato felt himself indebted to his great teacher is shown by his dialogues, which have not only handed down to us the portrait of Socrates, but in which Plato also expounded his own philosophy under the name of Socrates. Socrates became purely the symbol of philosophic thought.

Greek classical philosophy is, as it were, still in process of development with Socrates, still bound to the person; with Plato—and herein lies its extreme importance—philosophy becomes a principle. In Platonism it makes its effect felt through the centuries.

If one seeks to discover the main features of Platonic philosophy, one is driven to recognize that Platonic thought clearly reveals distinct stages of development. The early dialogues seem intended to make plain the advantage of Socratic philosophy; in the dialogues of the middle period of his life—roughly up to the *Republic*—the Platonic philosophy acquires its own form; the dialogues of the late period—especially the *Parmenides*, *Philebus*, and *Timaeus*—show Plato's philosophy proceeding to new problems: the artificially defined character of the Platonic theory of Ideas is, as it were, dissolved, the philosophy again acquires the character of development—the theory becomes the problem. This inner transformation of Platonic thought cannot be described here, although to know which works of Plato occupied the centre of interest at various times is fundamental to the understanding of the history of the influence of Platonism: thus the Platonism of the Middle Ages is chiefly determined by the *Timaeus*, which had become known from the time of Scotus Erigena; the Platonism of Cusanus was formed chiefly by the *Republic* and the *Parmenides*; again, in the Platonic Academy of Florence the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* stood in the foreground, whilst Galileo's Platonism was formed by the *anamnesis* and *hypothesis* theory of the *Meno*. For this reason different Platonic conceptions have arisen, whose unification has



only begun to occupy the attention of research into the history of philosophy in the last few decades.

It is sufficient for the purpose of our inquiry, however, to sketch the main features of Plato's theory of Ideas and to show its close connection with Plato's theory of the State.

In the first book of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle has indicated the place where the philosophy of Plato begins to form a part of the development of Greek thought:

'For from a young man having at the first been associated with Cratylus, and being conversant with the opinions of Heraclitus—that all sensible objects are in a state of continual flux, and that scientific knowledge concerning them had no existence—he [i.e. Plato], indeed, subsequently in this way came to entertain these suppositions. But while Socrates was engaged about the formation of systems of ethics, indeed, and that he broached no theory as regards the entire of Nature, seeing that he was searching, doubtless, in morals for the universal, and that he was the first to apply his understanding to the subject of definitions, Plato, having applauded him on account of this his investigation of universals, was led to entertain thus much of his supposition—as that this took place in regard of other things, and not in regard of certain of the objects that are cognizable by the senses; for it is impossible, in his opinion, that there should be a common definition of any of the sensible natures, seeing that they are continually in a state of undergoing a change. This philosopher, indeed, therefore, termed such things amongst entities, ideas; and asserted that all things are styled sensible according as they were different from these, or as they subsisted in accordance with these: for his theory was this—that, according to participation, the most of things synonymous are homonymous with the forms. Employing, however, the import of the term participation, he changed the name merely; for the Pythagoreans, indeed, affirm that entities subsist by an imitation of numbers: but Plato, by a participation of them, changing the name. At all events, as to participation at least, or imitation, what it may be, in the case of forms, they both in common omitted to investigate.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics*, trans. Rev. J. H. M'Mahon, Bohn, pp. 27-8.

We shall have to deal later with the question whether the Aristotelian criticism touches the heart of Platonic philosophy. But for the moment this much can be said: that the concept of participation (*methexis*) springs from the fundamental Greek idea, to which Aristotelian thought (as we shall see) is also bound, according to which a universal law of proportion—based upon the perfect form of the circle and the sphere—rules in human *and* in cosmic events. Just as temporal events occur in cyclic rhythm, so are events in the cosmos, in the courses of the stars and in the vault of heaven, subject to the same rule of law. Just as the Socratic identification of knowledge and virtue expressed the identity of thought and being in principle, so does 'participation' signify nothing else than the eternal and truly Greek law of proportion, expressed in the perfect unity of the share of sensual things in the existence of the world of ideas.

Plato casts no doubt upon the knowledge of truth as such. Astronomy and mathematics are examples of a true knowledge of truth. What occupied him was rather the problem: *How* is the knowledge of truth possible? The knowledge of truth is guided by 'Ideas' which cannot arise from the realm of physically perceptible things. If we call certain things equal, then our thought, by an act of comparison, brings to the things the fundamental conception of equality; if we call certain mathematical objects tangents or parallelograms, then we lay down an hypothesis which we cannot take from sensual reality, for in actuality the tangent never touches the circle at one point; finally, following Socrates, Plato presupposes moral norms or ideas, such as the Good, the Just, the Beautiful, the Pious, without which we cannot characterize individual cases as being good, just, beautiful, or pious. The realm of pure knowledge is independent of the apprehending subject and equally independent of the apprehended object. It is only accessible to thought directed towards pure being. The world of the senses is separated by an abyss (*chorismos*) from the world of Ideas. But man stands in the midst of, or rather, between, these two worlds. His task is to mediate between them. The urges and passions of man are rooted in his physical self, yet through his intellect

he turns to Ideas. The human soul is, in fact, able to overcome the separation of the two worlds; only if it is touched by sensual things is knowledge possible; on the other hand, the concepts must already be slumbering in the soul, as Plato put it, if the things of the senses are to stir the soul to produce knowledge. This is the meaning of the *anamnesis* theory, or theory of reminiscence, as it appears in Plato's dialogue, the *Meno*. A further word of explanation may seem convenient here. In what sense does Plato use the idea of reminiscence? The philosopher bases himself here upon the fundamental Orphic doctrine when he makes Socrates say:

'The soul being then immortal, having been often born, having beheld the things which are here, the things which are in Hades, and all things, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge. No wonder, therefore, that she is able to recollect, with regard to virtue as well as to other things, what formerly she knew. For all things in nature being linked together in relationship, and the soul having heretofore known all things, nothing hinders but that any man, who has recalled to mind, or, according to the common phrase, who has learnt, one thing only, should of himself recover all his ancient knowledge, and find out again all the rest of things; if he has but courage, and faints not in the midst of his researches. For inquiry and learning is reminiscence all.'<sup>1</sup>

According to this, the *anamnesis* theory still remains of course in the sphere of the mythical and mystical world of ideas. But by making an ignorant slave construct from a given square one twice as large, Plato shows the mathematically logical sense of his theory of reminiscence. The concepts and judgments by means of which we recognize things are of a nature that is both synthetic and *a priori*. All thinking does indeed *begin* with experience, but it does not *originate* from it. Thus the Kantian theory of knowledge was to formulate anew, more than two thousand years later, the Platonic theory of *anamnesis*. The *anamnesis* theory must be supplemented by a further theory of Plato's which has become of equally fundamental significance in the history of philosophical knowledge, namely that of

<sup>1</sup> *Meno*, in *Five Dialogues of Plato*, Everyman ed., pp. 90-1.

*hypothesis*. Knowledge becomes scientific, only when we take account of its cause. This concept is also introduced in the *Meno*, and indeed in close relation with the concept of *anamnesis*:

‘But you ask,’ Plato makes Socrates continue, ‘with what view it is that I speak of these images. I answer,—it is with a view to true opinions. For true opinions also, so long as they abide with us, are valuable goods, and procure for us all good things: but they are not disposed to abide with us a long time; for they soon slip away out of our souls, and become fugitives. Hence are they of small value to a man, until he has fastened and bound them down, *by deducing them rationally from their cause* [our italics]. And this, my friend Meno, is reminiscence, as we before agreed.’<sup>1</sup>

The new discovery in the Renaissance period of exact natural science was due to a large extent to a new understanding of the Platonic theory of Ideas. Thus, Galileo speaks of the ‘chains and fetters’ of cause, and in his concepts of the *per se*, of the *a priori*, the *anamnesis* theory is given new life. The profound influence of revived Platonism is also revealed in Kepler. The natural philosophy of the Middle Ages was influenced by the Aristotelian concept of Finality, which determines order and succession of rank in the cosmos. It is implied in all observation and mathematical perception. Following Copernicus, Kepler, however, overcomes this limitation of medieval thought on nature. Just as harmonies are laws of the human mind, and do not lie in the tones themselves, so must also the laws of the universe be conceived from a rule imposed by thought: ‘First we picture the nature of things in hypothesis, then on this basis we construct a calculation by tracing in a *deductive* [our italics] proof the movements which result from the supposed conditions.’<sup>2</sup> By this, however, Kepler expressed nothing else but what Plato intended by his *hypothesis* theory.

Platonic philosophy presupposes three stages of knowledge: aesthetic (sensual) knowledge, dianoetic knowledge (knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kepler, *Apologia Tychonis contra Ursum*, op. i, 242, cited in Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der neueren Zeit*, vol. i, p. 346.

in the realm of *methexis*), and finally, the highest stage, noetic knowledge, i.e. real philosophical knowledge. The allegory of the cave at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Republic* has portrayed the gradation in the Platonic theory of thought in a wonderful picture: the apprehending man finds himself within the cave and sees only the shadows of things, the dianoetic man has left the cave, but only the noetic man sees the sun in the realm of the Ideas.

'Now this simile, my dear Glaucon'—thus does Plato make Socrates interpret the allegory of the cave—'must be applied in all its parts to what we said before; the sphere revealed by sight being contrasted with the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire therein with the power of the sun. If you will set the upward ascent and the seeing of the things in the upper world with the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible sphere, you will have my surmise; and that is what you are anxious to have. Whether it be actually true, God knows. But this is how it appears to me. In the world of knowledge the Form of the good is perceived last and with difficulty, but when it is seen it must be inferred that it is the cause of all that is right and beautiful in all things, producing in the visible world light and the lord of light, and being itself lord in the intelligible world and the giver of truth and reason, and this Form of the good must be seen by whosoever would act wisely in public or in private.' <sup>1</sup>

In the idea of the good the pyramid of Platonic perception attains its apex; it is the complete, the divine—the soul of the world, as Plato expressed it in the *Timaews*, the work of his old age. A triangle which satisfies its definition is the triangle that it *ought* to be, its good lies in the fact that it is a *true* triangle. Every existing thing has a share in this highest good. The task of knowledge is—illuminated by the sight of the good—to understand the unity of the universe.

The Platonic picture of the world is an ascent from becoming to being. That is, to the being of the Ideas. Only by reference to the Ideas can the visible world be understood. In the *Timaews*, in which Plato's glance rests lovingly upon the order and beauty

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, Everyman ed., bk. vii, St. 517.

of the visible world, the universe becomes a closed unity through its mathematical proportion:

‘And of all bonds the best is that which makes itself and the terms it connects a unity in the fullest sense; and it is in the nature of a continued geometrical proportion to effect this most perfectly.’<sup>1</sup> Here ancient Greek rationalism finds its perfected form.

The Platonic theory of knowledge, whose structure we have described without entering into its finer and more involved subtleties, is, if regarded sociologically, clearly aristocratic. The highest stage of knowledge is reached only by the few. They are the philosophers destined to rule. Plato’s theory of the State is based upon his theory of knowledge. Only by reference to the latter can it be adequately understood.

In a letter written in his old age, the so-called *Seventh Epistle*, Plato has given us an autobiographical sketch of his political development, which greatly assists our understanding of his political theory:

‘Once upon a time in my youth I cherished like many another the hope, directly I came of age, of entering upon a political career. It fell out, moreover, that political events took the following course. There were many who heaped abuse on the form of government then prevailing, and a revolution occurred.’ It was the well-known oligarchical tyranny of the Thirty, in the year 404. ‘Some of these happened to be relatives and acquaintances of mine, who accordingly invited me forthwith to join them, assuming my fitness for the task. No wonder that, young as I was, I cherished the belief that they would lead the city from an unjust life, as it were, to habits of justice and really administer it; so that I was intensely interested to see what would come of it. Of course I saw in a short time that these men made the former government look in comparison like an age of gold. . . . Not long after came the fall of the Thirty and of their whole system of government. Once more, less hastily this time, but surely, I was moved by the desire to take part in public life and in politics. To be sure, in those days too, full of disturbance as they were, there were many things occurring to cause offence, nor is it surprising that in time of

<sup>1</sup> *Timaeus*, trans. F. M. Cornford, *Plato’s Cosmology*, London 1937.

revolution men in some cases took undue revenge on their enemies. Yet for all that the restored exiles displayed great moderation.' But in the end it was they, however, who had Socrates put to death. 'Now as I considered these matters,' Plato continues in his autobiographical narrative, 'as well as the sort of men who were active in politics, and the laws and the customs, the more I examined them and the more I advanced in years, the harder it appeared to me to administer the government correctly. For one thing nothing could be done without friends and loyal companions; and such men were not easy to find ready at hand, since our city was no longer administered according to the standards and practices of our fathers. Neither could such men be created afresh with any facility. Furthermore the written law and the customs were being corrupted at an astounding rate. The result was that I, who had at first been full of eagerness for a public career, as I gazed upon the whirlpool of public life and saw the incessant movement of shifting currents, at last felt dizzy, and while I did not cease to consider means of improving this particular situation and indeed of reforming the whole constitution, yet, in regard to action, I kept waiting for favourable moments, and finally saw clearly in regard to all states now existing that without exception their system of government is bad. Their constitutions are almost beyond redemption except through some miraculous plan accompanied by good luck. Hence I was forced to say in praise of the correct philosophy that it affords a vantage-point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals; and that accordingly the human race will not see better days until either the stock of those who rightly and genuinely follow philosophy acquire political authority, or else the class who have political control be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers [our italics].'<sup>1</sup>

From these passages one recognizes how Plato clung throughout his life to his fundamental belief that only philosophers can be true kings, true rulers. It was in order to educate them that he founded the Academy which has always been connected with his name, and through whose schools Cicero passed in the

<sup>1</sup> *Thirteen Epistles of Plato*, trans. L. A. Post, Oxford 1925, pp. 62-5.

hey-day of Rome to teach Greek philosophy and political theory to western Europe.

Let us now turn to the main features of Plato's political theory without examining in detail the important differences between his individual writings devoted to politics. Plato has given an exposition of his political theory in four works: the *Republic*, *Politicus*, the *Laws*, and lastly, once again summing up and with special reference to his political experiences in Sicily, the *Seventh Epistle*. We shall base our account chiefly on the *Republic*.

The highest aim of Plato's political order is the creation of a moral order for the realization of the virtue of Justice which embraces all other virtues. The true statesman, according to Plato, is neither more nor less than the man who guides the citizens to justice. One can therefore, with good reason, call the *Republic* of Plato a tract on justice.

Three classes make up the social structure of the State: the philosophers, i.e. the real rulers or guardians, the auxiliaries or administrators, and finally all other social groups who are beneath these first two classes in the hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Only 'when each class, money-makers, auxiliaries, and guardians, attends to what belongs to it, each doing its own work in the city,' will there be justice, making the city just.<sup>2</sup> Plato has sharply rejected a mixture of the three classes upon which the State is based. The actual wielders of political power are the philosophers and the administrators. Their mode of life is subject to the strictest discipline, obviously based upon the Spartan model. Their life belongs to the State; the State gives them their wives and educates their children. They stand outside the ranks of those who earn their living. They live their strict life *for* the State. Only for this reason—in order to be *fully* capable of the strict task of living for the common weal—does Plato take the philosophers and administrators out of the usual ranks of money-makers and the family and subject them to a strictly communistic type of discipline which alone enables them to devote their entire aim to the common good. It is this idea in Plato's theory of the State which is chiefly attacked by Aristotle.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. H. S. Crossman, *Plato To-day*, London 1937, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Republic*, bk. iv, St. 434.



Only the State where the philosophers rule and the auxiliaries preserve order within and without, is, according to Plato, the best State. Only such a State ensures justice. Plato expressly condemned democracy. In the eighth book of the *Republic*, he has criticized it very severely; first he points out its superficial appeal:

‘It will turn out to be the fairest of constitutions. . . . Like a garment of many colours of every shade and variety, this constitution will be variegated with every character and be most fair to look upon; and possibly, just as children and women admire many-coloured things, so many people will judge this city to be fairest of all.’<sup>1</sup>

But then he makes tyranny arise out of democracy: ‘In truth, any kind of excessive action is wont to lead to excessive reaction. This is true of the weather, of plants and of bodies, and not least of constitutions. . . . Excessive liberty, then, is likely to give place to nothing else than excessive slavery, both in individual and State.’<sup>2</sup>

Timocracy and oligarchy are also for Plato merely degenerate forms of the *true* State. Only in the latter are to be found the fundamental political virtues in proper distribution. ‘The virtues of the State are the virtues of its citizens, in so far as these are exercised in the interests of the whole. Therefore the wisdom of the State resides in the guardians, who take thought for the whole community; the courage in the auxiliaries, who resist attack from without and sedition within. The real part played by courage is that it preserves the principles upon which the State rests from all forces that would disturb them. Temperance resides in all three classes. It is the recognition on the part of the artisan and the soldier classes that the guardians deserve to rule, and the willingness on the part of the guardians to exercise their rule. There is still left unaccounted for the important principle on which the city was founded, the principle of the division of labour, that each man, and more especially each class, should do that work for which he or it is fitted, and no other. This, then, must be justice.’

We have taken this fine and penetrating description of the Platonic political virtues from A. D. Lindsay’s introduction to his

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. bk. viii, St. 557.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. St. 564.

translation of the *Republic*, to which we refer our readers who desire a short and reliable interpretation of the Platonic State.<sup>1</sup>

A profound harmony pervades the Platonic State—analogue to that of the universe, whose obedience to law has already been briefly touched upon above. We shall encounter the same idea later in Bodin's chief work on political theory, *Les Six Livres de la République*. Bodin's political theory is also a tractate on justice, for the political ideal of the end of the sixteenth century is also pervaded by the same profound striving for harmony.

The origin of the State is attributed by Plato to the division of labour: 'Men, being in want of many things, gather into *one* settlement many partners and helpers; one taking to himself one man, and another another, to satisfy their diverse needs, and to this common settlement we give the name of *city*.'<sup>2</sup>

This makes intelligible Plato's conception of the State as 'similar' to the individual: 'Are we not absolutely compelled to admit that there are in each one of us the same kinds and characteristics as there are in the city? For how else could they have got there?'<sup>3</sup> This theory of Plato's has exercised a strong influence in the subsequent history of political theory. Even the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes is influenced by the Platonic Utopia. In this analogy, however, is contained another important element. If the individual is the foundation of the structure of the State, does not this imply the contract theory of the State? Indeed, this is actually expressed in the *Republic*, where it is written:

'Therefore when men act unjustly towards one another, and thus experience both the doing and the suffering, those amongst them who are unable to compass the one and escape the other, come to this opinion: that it is more profitable that they should mutually agree neither to inflict injustice nor to suffer it. Hence men began to establish laws and covenants with one another, and they called what the law prescribed lawful and just. This, then, is the origin and nature of justice. It is a mean between the best—doing injustice with impunity—and the worst—suffering injustice without possibility of requital.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, Everyman ed., p. xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* bk. iv, St. 435.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* bk. ii, St. 369.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* bk. ii, St. 358.

But this is by no means the opinion of Plato; he is simply giving here an account of sophistic political thought. Its sole importance for us is that it affirms that the contract theory was familiar to ancient political thought. Finally, we must mention yet another political concept to which Plato devoted a detailed discussion in the *Laws*, and which has likewise been the subject of continual debate in the history of political ideas. It is the concept of natural law. Nature and law (i.e. positive law), thus Plato summarizes the sophistic position, were diametrically opposed (*Laws*, bk. x). Gods, and political and moral laws, are artificially created and in no way given 'by nature': 'As for right, there is absolutely no such thing as a real and natural right, mankind are eternally disputing about rights and altering them, and every change thus made, once made, is from that moment valid, though it owes its being to artifice and legislation, not to anything you could call nature.'<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to this Plato lays the greatest emphasis on the fact that the lawgiver, if he is a true lawgiver, 'should defend the claim of law itself and of art to be natural, or no less real than nature, seeing that they are products of mind by a sound argument.'<sup>2</sup> By this Plato formulated the law of nature in its 'ideal' form. Even political theory travels the path from becoming to the being of the Ideas.

A common fundamental sociological principle defines both Plato's theory of knowledge and his theory of politics. To only a few—to the philosophers—is the knowledge of truth given; only a few—the philosopher-kings—are the true rulers. This aristocratic conception of Plato's forms an integral part of his theory of knowledge and of his theory of politics. To demonstrate this once and for all, it is sufficient to refer to the Platonic theory of the political lie, which has recently been fully discussed by R. H. S. Crossman in his book, *Plato To-day*:

'It seems,' Plato makes Socrates say, 'that our rulers will have to administer a great quantity of falsehood and deceit for the benefit of the ruled.'<sup>3</sup> Plato's idealism is more realistic than is usually recognized in the history of philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> *Laws*, trans. A. E. Taylor, London 1934, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Republic*, bk. v, St. 459.

We shall now turn to discuss Aristotle's philosophical and political principles. According to trustworthy tradition, he was for twenty years a pupil of Plato and the Platonic Academy. If Plato was chiefly influenced in his scientific methods by astronomy and mathematics, for Aristotle medicine was of prime importance. Aristotle's father was physician at the Macedonian court and introduced his son at an early age to the secrets of the physician's art. At that time it was already in full flower. In the concept of the organism Aristotle discovered the physical concreteness of man and his totality as embracing intellect, emotions, passions, etc.

We have already touched upon the Aristotelian criticism of Plato's theory of Ideas. Here, in fact, the completely different point of departure of the two thinkers becomes absolutely clear. Plato's philosophical analysis is based from the first on the permanent existence of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, whilst Aristotle starts off from the sensual and the concrete: he does not seek to explain *being* so much as *becoming*. The Aristotelian criticism of Plato's theory of Ideas has been reduced to four arguments: firstly that the Ideas are not realities, secondly that they do not seem to be able to be used as the causes of things, thirdly that they cannot explain becoming, and finally that they seem incapable of use as principles for the construction of the sciences. The difference between the two thinkers is therefore absolutely impossible to reconcile. They are two fundamentally different thinking types. This contrast has, as we shall see, greatly influenced the subsequent history of science and philosophy.

Before giving an outline of the structure of the Aristotelian scientific system, we must give a short account of his metaphysics. It is the basic science which deals with pure being (ontology). One might think that thereby the contrast with the Platonic theory of Ideas would be in a certain way overcome. But this is not so, for the point of departure of the basic science lies in the relationship of being to becoming; its task includes the discovery of the *causes* of becoming. The analysis begins with the individual, with the concrete. From this Aristotle obtains his categories. Their order is based on that which is

concrete. They are, as it were, a cross-section through the actually existent. To this cross-section Aristotle then adds a longitudinal section. The concrete, which is understood as substance, is dissolved into its impulses or notions. For the structure of substance is a *becoming*. Matter is obtained as the first notion of substance. It is related to substance as the brick is to the house.<sup>1</sup> Matter is characterized by 'privation.' Privation is the lack of form, by which Aristotle obtains the second notion of concrete substance. Matter is the possibility of *becoming* form; actuality (in contrast to the potentiality of matter) is the name given by him to the real thing in which the concrete attains its *definition*. Aristotle gives four causes of being: matter, form, motion, and finality. Purposes are realized through the development of form.

We have been able here to give only a very summary account of the Aristotelian concepts by which Aristotle influenced later centuries. One must bear in mind that these concepts were created out of an unexampled concentration upon extremely concrete material. 'Not only metaphysics, but likewise physics and ethics, psychology and politics have been subjected by Aristotle to these concepts.'<sup>2</sup> The comprehensiveness and the philosophical consciousness or vigilance of Aristotle has scarcely again been attained in the history of western thought. In him is perfected the spirit of Greek antiquity. Diogenes Laertius has handed down to us an anecdote which illustrates this characteristic philosophical vigilance of Aristotelian thought: '... and when he lay down to rest he took a brass ball in his hand beneath which a basin was placed, so that he should be awakened by the noise when the ball fell into the basin.'<sup>3</sup> Aristotle wanted to stay awake and always be awake. In this anecdote the character of his thinking is illuminated.

The highest vigilance reveals to us the culminating peak of Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle defines it as thinking of thought

<sup>1</sup> We cannot here go into the difference between primary and secondary matter. Cf. for this the excellent account of the Aristotelian system by Ernst Hoffmann in *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by Max Dessoir, Berlin 1925, pp. 141 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Opinions of Famous Philosophers*, bk. v, 16.

(*noesis noeseos*). Every movement must have a motivating cause. But there must be a First Cause, if the concept of causation itself is not to be invalid. This first motivating cause must be reality. But if it is really to be the first motivating cause, then it must itself be unmotivated: 'Since, however, that which has motion impressed upon it and which imparts motion, subsists as a medium, there is, therefore, something which, not having motion impressed upon it, yet imparts motion, which is a thing that is eternal, being both substance and energy.'<sup>1</sup> With these words Aristotle describes his principle of the Unmoved Mover—God.

The principle of highest being is a pure act of thought, and by thinking this thought, human intelligence thinks of thought as the best and highest: 'Now, that which first imparts motion does so as a thing that is loved; and that which has motion impressed upon it imparts motion to other things.'<sup>2</sup>

But this highest principle is God: 'Now, the course of life of this First Mover—in like manner with our own, for a limited period of time—is such, also, as is the most excellent; for, in the present instance, doth that First Mover continue in the enjoyment of the principle of life for ever: for with us, certainly, such a thing as this would be impossible; but not so with the First Mover: since even doth the energy or activity of this First Mover give rise unto pleasure or satisfaction on the part of such; and on this account vigilance, exercise of the senses, and perception in general, are what is most productive of pleasure or satisfaction.'<sup>3</sup>

The highest vigilance therefore meets us here at the peak of the system. Once again in the history of western philosophy we encounter a vigilance of the same sort as Aristotle's, in the system of Hegel. It is extremely significant that Hegel concludes his *Encyclopaedia* with a quotation from the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics*. Just as the philosophy of Aristotle ascends from the sensual and concrete to the highest knowledge, so also the Hegelian philosophy is an ascent from the sensual *hic et nunc* to the highest sphere of absolute mind which he calls the Thing-in-itself. Both thinkers stand at the end of an epoch whose historical conditions they have worked into their systems and interpreted on a higher plane. Both thinkers are philosophers

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics*, Bohn ed., p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 331.

of an epoch approaching its close. 'The owl of Minerva first begins its flight with the approach of twilight,' wrote Hegel in clear consciousness of the late character of his philosophy. After the death of Aristotle began the cosmopolitan philosophy of Hellenism which Cicero merged into the Roman idea of world empire; after the death of Hegel there arose, based upon the theories and methods of the master, the social philosophy of Marxism whose political ideal is the 'Realm of the Free and Equal,' the overcoming of bourgeois liberalism. Regarded thus the identical structure of Aristotelian and Hegelian thought becomes especially illuminating.

Now that we have described, of course in an extremely simplified outline, the fundamental concepts of Aristotelian philosophy and its ascent from the sensual and material to the Unmoved Mover, we can pass on to discuss that philosopher's scientific system. Aristotle distinguishes three great groups of sciences. Firstly there are the theoretical sciences, amongst which are to be reckoned metaphysics, mathematics, and physics; with psychology and biology treated as branches of physics! Secondly there are the practical sciences, which include ethics and politics, in both of which the subject is the will of man as expressed in conduct, so that if inquiry be directed to the State as a whole, then we deal with politics as a science, but if the object of inquiry be the will as an expression of personal life, then we are dealing with ethics: the limits of both sciences, however, are fluctuating, for ethics is rooted in political science. Thirdly there are the poetical (derived from *poiesis*) sciences, amongst which are treated the arts of poetry, rhetoric, and medicine. Amongst the groups of sciences lies one science, namely logic, which is equally essential to them all and which Aristotle has called their instrument (*organon*). 'Whoever has not previously mastered it, cannot proceed to philosophy,' he expressly states in the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle's writings on logic have thus been brought together in a work entitled the *Organon*. It became known in the Middle Ages, chiefly through the translation of Boethius, long before his political works became current in the west. For this reason the medieval idea of Aristotle, up to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was chiefly determined by his *logical* writings. Aristotelian logic

divides the structure of thought very sharply into syllogisms, these into judgments, and these again into concepts (analytics); Aristotle discovered and described in especial the rule of law of the deductive method whereby, very much in contrast to later logicians, he was able to place exact limits on the subject-matter of logic as against psychology and philological science. Kant was still able to declare in the preface to his *Critique of Pure Reason* 'that logic ought not to have taken a step backwards since Aristotle.' Thus the rationalism of the west has obtained its permanent foundation in the *Organon* of Aristotle.

It was Aristotle who first succeeded—of course at the end of the classical period of Greek antiquity—in completely suppressing the mythical world, that world which still held both Socrates and Plato in its sway. The philosophy of Socrates and Plato still undoubtedly stood under the influence of the Orphic myth, that the imprisonment of the soul in the body can only be overcome in death. The last word of the dying Socrates to his pupils was the request that they should sacrifice a cock to Asclepius. Socrates experienced death as a purification. Plato, too, gave myth a significant place in his work. The concept of the world-maker (*Demiurge*) in the *Timaeus* is still influenced by myth; of course, Plato already uses the mythical picture in the *consciousness* of the limits of philosophical knowledge. Only Aristotle overstepped these limits. His God is no longer a picture, as we have seen, but the highest consciousness: the Concept. And yet we know that Aristotle occupied himself with myth in his old age. For he says of himself in a letter: 'in the crowd, in which I am solitary and alone, I become a friend of myths.'<sup>1</sup> It seems as if the most vigilant mind could not get on without the consolation of myth. Where it does not seek this consolation for itself, it runs the risk of degenerating into myth. The point where rationalistic thought shows signs of such degeneration in the history of the west is marked by the appearance of the *Utopia*.

In accordance with the structure of his philosophical system, the point of departure of Aristotle's political theory is history and experience. This is made particularly clear in the penetrating

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Werner Jäger, *Aristoteles*, Berlin 1923, p. 342.



criticism which Aristotle directs against the Platonic State. In his *Politics* he says, not without some trace of irony: 'Let us remember that we should not disregard the experience of ages; in the multitude of years these things, if they were good, would certainly not have been unknown; for almost everything has been found out, although sometimes they are not put together; in other cases men do not use the knowledge which they have.'<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Aristotle refers explicitly to historical experience, and in fact Aristotelian political theory is based upon a comprehensive collection of constitutions—we know of more than one hundred and fifty. Aristotle's criticism, however, goes further and attacks Plato's State at essential points. In the refutation and criticism of Plato, he formulates at the same time the principles of his own political philosophy. Aristotle particularly condemns the abolition of private property, which Plato had suggested for the guardians and philosopher-kings: 'Again, we ought to reckon, not only the evils from which the citizens will be saved [i.e. by community of property], but also the advantages which they will lose. The life which they are to lead appears to be quite impracticable.'<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle also condemns the community of wives and children; in short, the *family* is the foundation of his political order. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he praises the holiness of marriage. By so doing Aristotle made ancient political theory acceptable to later Christian political theory. The political philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas or even of Bodin cannot be made comprehensible without the fundamental institution of the family. Aristotle does not attribute the origin of the State to the division of labour; he expressly denies this idea of Plato's, since for him 'the State is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part.'<sup>3</sup> This is the meaning of the oft-quoted statement of Aristotle's that man is a 'political animal.' Even if the State arose later *historically*, the *entelechy* of the State was already laid down with the concept of man:

'But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need

<sup>1</sup> *Politics*, trans. Jowett, Oxford 1926, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 63-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature, and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors. For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with the arms of intelligence and with moral qualities which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony. But justice is the bond of men in states, and the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society.’<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle therefore clung to the unity of virtue and happiness as taught by Socrates and Plato, except that, in accordance with the fundamental principle of his philosophical system, he constructed his theory of virtue in a much more concrete way. It would be going beyond the limits of our essay to describe the Aristotelian theory of virtue; in it the ethical universe is also shown to be firmly grafted on to the whole formed by the Greek world. The post-Aristotelian development of philosophy and the sciences is chiefly marked by the division of knowledge into individual spheres of knowledge. The period of individual sciences begins.

It is the task of politics—and here Aristotle agrees with Plato—to find a form of the State which is simply the best. He has himself stated this clearly at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: ‘First then, let us endeavour to get whatever fragments of good there may be in the statements of our predecessors; next, from the Politics we have collected, ascertain what kind of things preserve or destroy Communities, and what, particular Constitutions; and the cause why some are well and some are ill-managed, for after such inquiry, we shall be the better able to take a concentrated view as to *what kind of Constitution is best* [our italics], what kind of regulations are best for each, and what laws and customs.’<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle distinguishes two groups of States: the healthy and the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 29–30.

<sup>2</sup> Everyman ed., p. 262.

perverted, or as Oncken puts it, just States and tyrannical States. Monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy form the group of healthy States; tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy are their perverted forms. The principle of monarchy and aristocracy is virtue, the principle of democracy is freedom. Each constitution arises according to the share of the social groups in the powers of government and especially according to their share in the sovereign power. The political theory of Aristotle is a *class-theory* of the State.

Aristotle would seem to regard classes as natural, for he apparently believes in the natural inequality of mankind, and this makes him justify the institution of slavery. 'From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.' Therefore slavery is not a violation of nature. 'For he who can be, and therefore is another's, and he who participates in reason enough to apprehend, but not to have, reason, is a slave by nature.' Yet at the same time he objects to what he calls 'slavery by law,' i.e. slavery based on force, as in the case of prisoners of war.

What, then, is the best possible State? Let Aristotle answer this question himself: 'Thus it is manifest that the best political community is formed by citizens of the middle class, and that those States are likely to be well administered, in which the middle class is large, and larger if possible than both the other classes, or at any rate than either singly; for the addition of the middle class turns the scale, and prevents either of the extremes from being dominant. Great, then, is the good fortune of a State in which the citizens have a moderate and sufficient property; for where some possess much, and the others nothing, there may arise an extreme democracy, or a pure oligarchy; or a tyranny may grow out of either extreme—either out of the most rampant democracy, or out of an oligarchy; but is not so likely to arise out of a middle and nearly equal condition. . . . One man alone of all who ever ruled in Hellas was induced to give this middle constitution to States.'<sup>1</sup>

Does Aristotle refer here to Pericles? We do not know for certain, but it is probable. In which case the circle of ancient political theory, which we have traversed, is completed.

<sup>1</sup> *Politics*, pp. 169 and 171.

## 3. ALEXANDER AND THE LEGACY OF GREECE

For with the epoch of Alexander the Great we have already left the soil of classical antiquity, even though the young Alexander still sat as pupil at the feet of Aristotle, learning from him the sum of ancient classical knowledge. The era of the Greek city states is succeeded by the world empire of the Hellenistic period. The world state replaces the Greek *polis*, world culture replaces the classical Greek distinction between Greek and barbarian. Thus the cosmopolitan ideas of the Stoic philosophy were modelled on the Alexandrian world empire which subjected the Persian monarchy to the Greek spirit and merged the culture of the orient with the Greek spirit on a new plane of western world-consciousness. 'Aristotle advised his royal pupil to appear as *lord* to the barbarians, but to show himself to the Greeks as *leader* and to care for them as if they were friends and relations. This was in the spirit of the Stoic philosophy, but also in that of Alexander's policy of cosmopolitan unification, and it happened in express connection with the latter that Erasthenes, in opposition to the view of Aristotle, thought to abolish the distinction between Hellenes and barbarians and to make one only between the *good* and the *bad*.' <sup>1</sup> With the supreme confidence of his youthful powers and assured that he was the creator of a *new* epoch, Alexander brushed aside the advice of his old teacher and consumed himself—like the flame—in his mission.

Let us now take a brief glance at the influence of ancient ideas in the later history of the west. Until the time when the Middle Ages reached their highest development, Aristotle was regarded as 'the Philosopher.' Plato's influence on the Middle Ages—in the Hellenistic adaptation of Plotinus, if one ignores the *Timaeus* of which we have already spoken—was only slight. If it was chiefly the logical writings of Aristotle that occupied the foreground in the early Middle Ages, his scientific and political writings became known in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries through Arabic versions. William of Moerbeke translated the *Politics* in the thirteenth century. The hierarchical structure of

<sup>1</sup> Our italics; see J. Kaerst, 'Alexander der Grosse,' in *Meister der Politik*, ed. Erich Marx and K. A. von Müller, Berlin 1922, vol. i, pp. 33 ff.

the Aristotelian system—rising from the concrete to the Unmoved Mover—was completely in harmony with the medieval view of the world. And yet in the fifteenth century began the victorious march of Platonism. The method of Platonic *hypothesis* was rediscovered—in express opposition to Aristotle. The systematic spirit of Aristotelian thought could no longer be made to coincide with the new concept of nature which the Renaissance period produced. In Galileo's theory of motion, Plato's critical theory of Ideas is resurrected. Thus it came about that Hobbes, in the seventeenth century, tried to apply Galileo's method to the totality of the social world. In the conclusion to the second part of the *Leviathan* we find an echo of the Platonic concept of the philosopher-kings. In Thomas Hobbes also rationalism degenerates into *Utopianism*. Let us briefly make the meaning of this degeneration clear. In the dedicatory letter of his *De Cive*, Hobbes writes: 'For were the nature of human actions as distinctly known as the nature of quantity in geometrical figures, the strength of avarice and ambition, which is sustained by the erroneous opinions of the vulgar as touching the nature of right and wrong, would presently faint and languish; and mankind should enjoy such an immortal peace, that unless it were for habitation, on supposition that the earth should grow too narrow for her inhabitants, there would hardly be left any pretence for war.'<sup>1</sup>

The rationalism of Hobbes thus reveals, as against the rationalism of classical antiquity, a characteristic difference: the Greek thinkers started from the assumption of the identity in structure of thinking and being; Hobbes knows about the fundamental powers of impulse in being, but he *believes* in the power of reason to control these impulses and passions. Reason in no way abolishes the irrational existence of impulses and passions. The best it can do is to understand and to guide them. But the belief that the human being is able to control himself rationally is an indication of the beginning of what we call Utopian rationalism.

We have now described the main features of the historical achievement of classical Greek antiquity. In its entirety are rooted the fundamental categories of *our* world: 'We shall never be rid of antiquity unless or until we become barbarians again.'

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes's *English Works*, ed. Molesworth, II. iv.

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NOTE.—At the end of each chapter is given a list of books which have led us to our own conception of the matter under discussion. We have made no effort to give complete bibliographies as this would mean at least doubling the compass of the present work.

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<sup>1</sup> English translation, Oxford 1938.

## CHAPTER II

### IMPERIUM ROMANUM

#### I. THE LEGACY OF HELLENISM

THE world empire of Alexander fell to pieces under his successors. The three great eastern powers—the kingdoms of the Antigonids, Seleucids, and Ptolemies—which emerged after the severe struggles of the Diadochi, became the bearers of a Hellenistic culture which bridged east and west up till the time of Augustus. Oriental and Greek forms of life permeated one another, mutually fertilizing, but eventually Greek *ratio* proved itself the stronger. Greek became the universal language, Greek science and Greek philosophy fashioned into a unity the dark powers which streamed out of the orient, so that we may justly speak of the period of Hellenism as a new stage of western culture.

The Hellenistic kingdoms were based on Hellenist-Macedonian military institutions; the ancient *polis* was replaced by Hellenistic cosmopolitan cities—Seleucia, Antioch, and Alexandria. The library of Alexandria constituted a critical collection of everything written hitherto in the Greek language. Euclid and Archimedes were the most important mathematicians of the *oikoumene* in the third century B.C. Euclid's geometry systematized Greek thought on space; his strictly deductive method was used as the model of clear thinking in the seventeenth century—the beginning of the modern period; and Euclidean geometry is still taught to-day in all schools. Archimedes sought to introduce the modern dynamic concept of infinity into the static Greek mode of thought. His method of exhaustion was to be taken up again later by Nicholas Cusanus, Newton, and Leibniz.

The economic system of the Hellenistic age was a peculiar one of *State economy*. Important branches of production, such as the

manufacture of oil and fine linen, were completely monopolized. This system of monopoly increased in strength and drew into its orbit especially those crafts connected with raw material and mass-distribution. 'In Roman times,' writes Max Weber in his *Agrarverhältnisse im Altertum*, 'we find, for instance, leases of brick-yard monopolies also, so that the majority of the most elementary necessities—bread, oil, building materials, clothing—passed partly through the hands of the State.'<sup>1</sup> This State economy, which the Diocletian administration later copied in some respects, developed a system of personal service to the State (*leitourgia*), in which, through a combination of ancient Egyptian and specifically Hellenistic institutions, private wealth was made responsible for every public duty, even down to that of night watchman to the village. 'Even the most important source of capitalist wealth, the State lease (and especially the farming of taxes), is affected by this system of personal service. . . . The free disposal of the Athenian, and especially of the Roman, tax-farmer, which resulted from the defects of bureaucracy, is seen here in contrast with the collection of taxes by the State.'<sup>2</sup> The State even took over the administration of Church revenues. Thus the Hellenistic economy is characterized (and most clearly in Egypt) by State personal service, State monopoly, and State interference.

The trade routes from China and India led through the kingdom of the Seleucids, through Iran to Syria, and through Asia Minor to the Ionian cities. The new cosmopolitan cities of which we have already spoken greatly exceeded the cities of classical antiquity in size. A new world-consciousness arose, a world-consciousness in the truest sense of the word, to which the philosophies of the time, Stoicism and Epicureanism, gave expression. In them the Alexandrian idea of world empire found its language. Furthermore, in the Greek of the Septuagint, and later in that of the New Testament, the Hellenistic age became a permanent force in western culture.

Zeno founded the Stoic school in Athens in 308 B.C. Epicurus

<sup>1</sup> In *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Social- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Tübingen 1924, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



formed his school, named after his garden, two years earlier. The great quarrels between these two philosophical schools and the complicated history of their development belong rather to specialized histories of philosophy. We are concerned here only with their social and political doctrines, which became of incalculable significance in the later history of the west. Neither of these schools begins by naturally assuming the *politeia*, as do ✓ Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; instead, the individual as such is for them the object of inquiry, the State being brought in only indirectly. This marks a characteristic change in the political point of departure. The ancient city states had become merged into the great Hellenistic kingdoms. The philosopher's sphere no longer lay within the realm of a Greek city state which could be viewed as a whole; the individual had, as it were, become self-sufficient and withdrew himself from the social organization of the great Hellenistic kingdom into his individuality.

The Stoics taught a natural unity of men amongst themselves and a moral and spiritual community with *all* peoples and gods; but this moral and spiritual community, which they called *politeia*, is by no means a world empire in the juristic sense, even though Stoic ideas were later applied in this way in Grotius's doctrine of the law of nations. ✓ *Politeia* is interpreted by them as implying that reason and morality are the bonds uniting all people. The impulse to form a community is given to every man with his reason. Since, however, in all men the *same* reason is active and so has the force of a universal law, there is, actually, only *one* law, *one* right, *one* State. 'The universal law,' writes Zeno, 'which exists in right reason and which permeates everything, is identical with *Zeus*, the guider of world order.'<sup>1</sup> The theory of the forms of the State which had engaged classical Greek political thought for two hundred years is developed by the Stoic philosopher in one aspect only: he holds that the best form of the State is not merely a mixture of democracy and aristocracy but requires as ✓ a third element, *basileia*, visualizing a form of the State in which dominion belongs to the wise man because he alone knows the difference between good and evil. The Roman emperor, Marcus

<sup>1</sup> *Diogenis Laertii de vitis, dogmatis et apophthegmatis clarorum philosophorum libri decem*, vii. 88.

Aurelius, later approximated more closely to this ideal of government than did those Hellenist kings to whom the Stoic philosophers first held it up.

If emphasis on the idea of a world state (even supposing, as we have already remarked, it is not to be taken juristically) implied in Stoic thought an aloofness from practical participation in the political affairs of the here and now, in Epicureanism the separation of the individual from the political community was advocated still more strongly. 'The wise man,' declared Epicurus, 'will not engage in politics nor want to be a ruler.'<sup>1</sup> And elsewhere: 'The crown of spiritual peace is incomparably more valuable than leading positions in the State.'<sup>2</sup> In contrast to Aristotle and the Stoic doctrine, Epicurus denies that a natural community, or a law of nature, exists at all: 'Let not yourselves be deceived, O men, nor be misled, nor imposed upon! There is not—believe me!—any natural mutual community for thinking men. Whoever says otherwise, deceives and cheats you.'<sup>3</sup> In another fragment Epicurus sharply denies the existence of the law of nature: 'There is no law of nature; crimes are to be avoided, because otherwise fear could not be avoided.'<sup>4</sup> For the Epicureans there is no justice existing independently as such; it is recognized only on the assumption of definite agreements. 'Natural justice exists in an agreement aimed at the mutual benefits of not injuring one another, nor letting oneself be injured.'<sup>5</sup> And he goes on to say: 'For all living beings who are not in a condition to conclude an agreement not to injure one another nor let themselves be injured, there is neither justice nor injustice; furthermore it is precisely the same for all nations who cannot or will not make an agreement of this kind.'<sup>6</sup> In this the contrast between Epicurus and the Stoa becomes particularly clear: the State for Epicurus exists in an agreement, for the Stoa in a community given by Nature. But these two concepts have often been combined in the history of western political thought. Justice is therefore conceived of as being subject to continual change. Of the existing forms of the State,

<sup>1</sup> *Diogenis Laertii de vitis*, etc., x. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Arr., Epict. diss.* II. xx. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Diogenis Laertii de vitis*, etc., x. 150. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Plut., Adv. Col.* 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Sen., Ep.* xcvi. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* xxxii.

monarchy appears the most acceptable to Epicurus. In contrast to the dull masses the wise man stands apart, preserving his external independence and living free from passions. He fears neither pain, death, nor the gods. This rugged individualism is comprehensible only if we remember the political dismemberment of the Hellenistic age. The ancient *polis* has finally vanished. Epicurean ideas have had an immeasurable importance in the later history of the west. The naturalistic philosophy of modern times has continually reached back to Epicurean motives. Wherever the individual has become the axis of world thought—in the Renaissance period, for example, and in the naturalistic thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the ideas of the Epicurean school have repeatedly been revived.

## 2. THE GROWTH OF ROMAN UNIVERSALISM

The transition and merging of Hellenism into the Roman world becomes comprehensible if we examine closely the emergence of the latter. The rise of Rome to a world power took place largely in independence of the great kingdoms of the east. It is true that east and west knew of one another. When the decemvirs, in response to the urgings of the plebeians, drew up the Law of the Twelve Tables (about the middle of the fifth century B.C.), a delegation of Roman patricians toured the Greek cities in order to study Greek law and especially the laws of Solon in Athens.

Yet the Roman character had been formed in hard tribal and popular struggles on the Italian peninsula before it entered into closer contact with ancient Hellenistic culture. From the year 295 B.C. the peninsula was firmly in Roman hands. A detailed account of these struggles and their external results has been given in every text-book on the subject since the great German historian, G. B. Niebuhr, completed his investigations into early Roman history. The spirit of the legislation of the Twelve Tables indicates an already long tradition of definite legal and political institutions.

In 366 B.C. the plebeians, as a result of severe internal struggles,

achieved admission to the highest office in the State, the consulship, and in the centuries that followed the republican Government was able to make Rome a world power. Very prudently Rome stationed in the civic communities of the Italian peninsula, when at last they were conquered, Roman garrisons that could instantly be mobilized for war. Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were overcome; mighty Carthage, which must be regarded as the western bulwark of Hellenistic culture from the third century onwards, was subdued after severe wars which strained Rome almost to breaking-point; the same fate befell the Spanish peninsula which lay under Carthage's influence. At roughly the same time the Hellenistic kingdoms in the east were faced with difficulties. Rome was called in to furnish aid. In 196 B.C. Greece was taken under the protective hegemony of Rome and the Seleucid kingdom as far as Syria was conquered from the Parthians. Only the Ptolemies still succeeded in maintaining themselves. Soon the protectorate was replaced by the institution of the Roman province. Thus in 146 B.C. Macedonia was reduced to the status of a province. Only Sparta and Athens, as a mark of respect for their honourable traditions, were declared to be 'allies' of Rome. When, about the middle of the second century B.C., Scipio the younger was waging the Third Punic War and wept bitterly at the sight of burning Carthage, he was asked by his companion and teacher, the great Greek historian Polybius, for the reason of his tears. Scipio answered that he was thinking of the turn of destiny; Rome, too, would one day go up in flames: 'The day will come when holy Ilios will perish.'

Let us pause here for a moment, at the zenith of Roman splendour and Roman might. Polybius, too, as it were, held his breath at this point and wrote those *Histories* in which the experienced Greek assigned to the Roman world its place in the universal history of his time. In Polybius' great work, the compromise between ancient Hellenistic tradition and the new Roman principle of universality is worked out. Born of an aristocratic Greek family, filled with the rich traditions of Hellenistic education, Polybius came into the closest contact with the political events of his Greek homeland. As a prisoner he came to Rome, where he made the acquaintance of Scipio the

younger, becoming in due course his tutor and friend. After a long life, Polybius in his old age was to see the violent convulsion of the Roman Republic by the Gracchan revolution.

In Polybius' history, western historical thought attains to a new stage of consciousness. It is no longer the city-state pragmatism of Thucydides or the analytic temper of Aristotle which characterizes historical thought; Polybius thinks explicitly in categories of universal history. Dilthey has impressively described this new historical thinking of Polybius: 'The original, universal character of his historical writing lay, however, in his comprehension of the changing effect produced by the states which determine history within a given period, and in his endeavour to deduce therefrom individual political events. . . . He makes it plain that his subject itself led him to this kind of consideration, for he saw that the events of his time in Italy, Asia, Greece, and Africa were closely interconnected and worked together to create Roman world power, and recognized that his theme required a new kind of historical writing which should rise above the history of individual states and be directed to universal developments. Yet Polybius also lived under the influence of the Greek idea of the cyclical movement of all earthly things. 'This strutting Roman State, which had just subdued the Semitic race, would perish. Amidst the exuberance of the Roman will to power, the Greek observer preserved a coolness of mind which breathes from his work, bracing and indeed chilling the reader. The very completeness of Rome's domination, together with the increase of wealth and luxury, must result in the collapse of its aristocratic regime. Democracy, then mass-rule, will set in.'<sup>1</sup>

In the sixth book of his *Historias* Polybius has described and permanently recorded for posterity the functioning of Roman political institutions. Aristocratic, monarchist, and democratic elements interpermeate, each seeking to predominate, and acting as mutual checks: 'For if one fixed one's eyes on the power of the consuls, the constitution seemed completely monarchical and royal; if on that of the senate, it seemed to be aristocratic; and if

<sup>1</sup> Das 18. Jahrhundert und die geschichtliche Welt, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. iii, p. 213 f.

one looked at the power of the masses, it seemed clearly to be a democracy.’<sup>1</sup> After Polybius has described the extent and limits of each of these powers, he remarks that ‘their union is adequate to all emergencies, so that it is impossible to find a better political system than this.’<sup>2</sup> In fact this mixed Roman constitution, so long as the equilibrium was not upset, conditioned and upheld Roman power. It has become effective only once again in the political life of the west—in the political constitution of England. When Mr Baldwin said that the English people was a nation for emergencies, he was thinking of this harmonious co-operation between the three great constitutional forces of monarchy, Parliament, and people. If one recalls the English constitutional crisis of the end of 1936, then the unity of the English nation in those days of internal danger reminds one of the best period of Roman history. This Roman political system of checks and balances was not thought out or invented—we shall come back to this later in our account of Cicero—but grew out of long and difficult experience.

✓ Roman political institutions are closely connected with the Roman idea of law. The State is, according to Cicero’s conception, nothing else than an association based on justice. Without law there is no State. The Roman conception of law reveals in its historical origins the same characteristic features which condition the attitude of the Roman to the State: a highly developed feeling for dignity, tradition, purposiveness, and equality before the law. Let us now describe this in more detail.

Eminent experts on Roman law, such as Ihering and James Bryce, have also noticed in their study of Roman ideas of law a profound similarity between the Roman and English character. Ihering has expressed it perfectly: ‘It has been observed that peoples who have originated from a mixture of different national elements are distinguished by powers of endurance, and this observation applies in a high degree to the Roman people, and to that one of the modern nations which has the most similarity to it, namely the English. . . . Those characteristics in the different nationalities which cannot withstand this ordeal by fire, perish; those which stand firm and persist in the newly formed

<sup>1</sup> *The Histories of Polybius*, vi. 11, Loeb ed., p. 297.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 18, p. 309.

nationality have proved their indestructible nature. In this way the character of the people formed from these elements gains in energy, seriousness, sternness, hardness, and practical wisdom what it loses in youthfulness, *naïveté*, caprice, and all the characteristics which produce a certain innocence of outlook and an untroubled external happiness—a character made to rule the world, not to charm it. They are the kind of peoples who have to borrow from other nations works of the imagination, and give in return their institutions and laws. With a sober view of life and a nature incapable of rashness and indecision, they are destined above all for the cultivation of law . . . The spiritual substance in Rome is an acid which, when it comes into contact with the living organism of another nationality, painfully agitates it, decomposes and dissolves it. Rome's history begins with its own national self-conquest, and its culminating point shows us the Roman State standing at the boundary of the ancient and modern worlds with the peoples of that time bruised and crushed at its feet. Upon the downfall of this political domination of the world, there arises in its place the world dominion of the Church—a dominion of the spirit, mightier even than that of the sword—and, as if the impulse of centralization and expansion in the Roman spirit were once again stimulated thereby centuries after the decline of the Roman people, *the world dominion of Roman law*.<sup>1</sup>

After this masterly description by Ihering of the significance of Roman law in world history, we may go on to outline a few of its characteristics. Despite its obvious, formal severity, Roman law can by no means be called abstract law. The Romans reveal an uncommon shyness of abstraction. 'It is true,' writes so eminent an expert on Roman law as Fritz Schulz, 'that the Roman attitude, from this point of view also, has not remained the same throughout the various periods; the last century of the Republic inclined somewhat more strongly to abstraction than the classical period; the post-classical—the Byzantine period—again more strongly than the classical. But compared with the jurisprudence of natural law in the eighteenth century, or even with German jurisprudence in the nineteenth century, Roman jurisprudence

<sup>1</sup> *Der Geist des römischen Rechtes*, Leipzig 1888, vol. i, pp. 312 ff.

seems on the whole to be rather averse to abstraction.’<sup>1</sup> Of extreme importance is the traditionalism of Roman law and in this it approximates again very closely to the English idea of law. Valid laws are only rarely, and then reluctantly, repealed; it is preferred to place a new law alongside the old for use if required, so that the older law falls gradually into disuse. Here, too, Schulz has again fastened upon the important point: ‘The conservative attitude that we have described remains astonishingly constant in the history of Roman law. It dominates the men of the Republic as it does those of the Principate and of the later Empire; even in the circle round Justinian the conservative attitude predominates in despite of all un-Roman enthusiasms for reform, and there is no more real monument of Roman conservatism than the *Corpus Juris* of Justinian. . . . A plan such as that of the *Pandects* of creating a law-book from the excerpts of a jurisprudence which extended back some three to five hundred years, could only be conceived in the minds of people who disregarded the historical circumstances of this jurisprudence, who thought of classical jurisprudence as present and not as past, as forming a unity with Byzantine jurisprudence, to whom the distance separating them from Ulpian and Julian seemed not much greater than the distance separating them from the Byzantine heroes.’<sup>2</sup>

Let us now pass on to the Roman idea of liberty. It no more implies liberty in the sense of capriciousness than does the English idea of liberty. That every one should do as he pleased is not the distinguishing feature of Roman liberty; it is rather the idea that that man is free who has no master over him to restrict his right of self-determination. In this sense the gentleman-ideal in English political thought is also related to the Roman *libertas*. The Romans also regard a community as being free, even though it has lost its national sovereignty by entry or absorption into the Roman military confederacy. In this, too, the constitution of the British Empire supplies certain parallels. ‘The idea of winning equal citizen rights, of a change in power so that every one has the prospect of coming into power, such as the liberty of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Die Prinzipien des römischen Rechtes*, Munich 1934, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 59 and 77 f.



Greek democracy demanded, never entered the head of a Roman.<sup>1</sup> The Roman popular assembly on the Capitol was no debating society like the Athenian general assembly (*ekklesia*). The people was presented with ready-made decisions which it could accept or reject, but even this kind of popular voting, which has been revived again in the plebiscites of modern authoritarian states, could be suspended by the leading official if he anticipated an unfavourable verdict.

The relationship of the individual to the State is described by Schulz in the following manner; it is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the English State: 'Great as are the demands made by the Roman State on its citizens as regards military service, and also in the beginning as regards taxation, yet equally great is the freedom which it concedes to them as against the community. Roman history knows at no period of an all-embracing *polis* because Greek democracy and the Spartan barrack-life remain unknown to it. And so that "separate existence, alongside the State and public life," of which Jacob Burckhardt said that "it is demanded by men of our race as soon as they emerge from barbarism—an undisturbed home and an independent circle of thoughts and feelings," was in essence never touched during the republican and classical periods. Freedom of opinion, belief, and culture were not guaranteed without limits but in a large measure.'<sup>2</sup> Thus far Schulz. Is it not opportune in the Europe of the present day to recall these obvious fundamentals of political and legal life?

We have in the foregoing by no means exhausted the characteristics of Roman law; we have merely been concerned to give a few of its broad outlines, to show how it must form a part of the structure of the Roman universal principle.

### 3. CICERO AND THE ROMAN STATE

At the end of the republican period, the Roman spirit finds its classical expression in the life and work of Cicero (106-43 B.C.). In his youth Cicero studied in the school of the Greek philo-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 108 f.

sophers. In Athens and Rhodes he drew spiritual sustenance from the tradition of the classics and the Stoics. Before Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's *Republic* became known in the Middle Ages, it was Cicero who transmitted to the west the ancient Hellenistic tradition and the political consciousness of the Roman world citizen. But Cicero's influence went further than this. It was through him, also, that Latin became the linguistic instrument of political philosophy in the west. A scholar like Eduard Schwartz writes in this connection: 'Latin . . . was as unsuited as possible for the exposition of Hellenistic philosophy, which commanded a wealth of terminology and had developed all types of the scientific material from the driest academic Greek to the blossoming fullness of philosophic rhetoric, and yet despite this Cicero, and he alone, succeeded in making it into an imperfect, it is true, yet usable means of expression for philosophers.'<sup>1</sup> Through Augustine, on whom Cicero exercised the most profound influence both before and after his conversion, the effect of his teaching passed on into medieval western thought.

As orator, lawyer, administrator, consul, and Roman senator, Cicero stood in the stirring centre of his time: he saw the dictatorship of Sulla as highest official of the Roman State, he suppressed the Catiline conspiracy, he witnessed the rise and fall of Caesar. Hardly any philosopher who has played an important part in shaping western political thought has been able as he did to derive his theory from political practices. Cicero was conscious of being a proud citizen of the Roman Empire.

The natural inequality of men, which Aristotle's *Politics* began with as an axiom, is opposed by the Roman with the Stoic idea of the essential equality of all men. Cicero is no doubt convinced of the *actual* inequality and corruptness of social conditions, but he envisages a supreme universal law prevailing—the universal reason of the Stoics—which all human order with claims to truth and validity must strive to obey, no matter how far social reality may be from the 'rational' equality of all. The measure of justice and of political laws can lie only in the realm of the eternal law of nature.

<sup>1</sup> *Charakterköpfe aus der antiken Literatur*, Leipzig 1906, p. 119.

In his treatise *De Legibus*, Cicero formulates these ideas, so important to political thought in the west, in the following way: ' . . . but out of all the material of the philosophers' discussions, surely there emerges nothing more valuable than the full realization that we are born for Justice, and that right is based, not upon men's opinions, but upon Nature. This truth will immediately become plain if you once get a clear conception of man's fellowship and union with his fellow-men. For no single thing is so like another, so exactly its counterpart, as are all of us to one another. Nay, if bad habits and false beliefs did not twist the weaker minds and turn them in whatever direction they incline, no one would be so like his own self as *all* men would be like all others. And so, however we may define man, a single definition will apply to all. This is a sufficient proof that there is no difference in kind between man and man; for if there were, one definition could not be applicable to all men: and indeed, reason, which alone raises us above the level of the beasts and enables us to draw inferences . . . is certainly common to us all, and, though varying in what it learns, at least in the capacity to learn it is *invariable*.<sup>1</sup> We shall encounter these very same philosophical assumptions in St Augustine, in the *Summa Theologiae* of St Thomas Aquinas, and later in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, even though in the latter they are tinged with Epicureanism.

What Cicero expresses here in connection with the theory of knowledge appears, logically enough, in his political philosophy also. These ideas, too, have become merged into the tradition of western thought: 'Therefore, since law is the bond which unites the civic association, and the justice enforced by the law is the same for all, by what justice can an association of citizens be held together when there is no equality among the citizens? For if we cannot agree to equalize men's wealth, and equality of innate ability is impossible, the legal rights at least of those who are citizens of the same commonwealth ought to be equal. For what is a State except an association or partnership in justice?'<sup>2</sup> The great Roman jurists of the second and third centuries A.D. took over the Ciceronian ideas of rights and politics, and from

<sup>1</sup> *De Legibus*, I. x. 28 ff., trans. W. Keyes, Loeb Classics, p. 329; our italics.

<sup>2</sup> *De Republica*, I. xxxii. 48 f., trans. W. Keyes, Loeb Classics, p. 75 f.

them they were absorbed into the classical codification of Roman law which will for ever be associated with the name of Justinian. Of course we find important accretions in the Justinian legal code which clearly testify to the influence of Christianity. The law of nature is expressly traced back in it to eternal, divine providence (*divina quaedam providentia*, Just., § 11. I. 1, 2). ✓ This Christian interpretation of the idea of natural law was promulgated chiefly by St Augustine. He explained the law of nature as an emanation from the reason and will of the personal God—an original innovation which becomes completely intelligible only on reference to the position of Cicero. Rehm rightly places special emphasis on this connection in his *Geschichte der Staatsrechtswissenschaft*: 'Heathen philosophy, especially Cicero's, also derived the law of nature from God's reason; but this tracing of the law of nature to a divine origin acquires quite another significance when religion is traced to revelation; then it becomes easier for the jurist to regard God, like earthly rulers, as a legislator, and to regard the law of reason, therefore, as an objective, positive law.'<sup>1</sup> On this foundation medieval political theory in the west was able to erect its powerful structure.

The idea of the law of nature becomes more closely defined in its connection with the idea of the origin of the State. Here, however, Cicero's position is more original than the history of his influence suggests. It was a Stoic tenet that man was by nature a social animal. In this respect Cicero was in agreement with Aristotle's *Politics*: man is a political being, *zoon politicon*. The State, according to Cicero, arose gradually out of the most elementary form of human association, the family. The 17th section of Book I of the *De Officiis* describes this organic structure of the State with unforgettable beauty.

In the later history of political thought—in St Thomas Aquinas, and as late as Hobbes and Rousseau—the idea of the law of nature became merged in the contract theory of the State. Even in Cicero we find a clear indication of the idea of the contract theory, in the third book of the *De Republica*: 'But when there is mutual fear, man fearing man and class fearing class, then, because no one is confident in his own strength, a sort of bargain is made

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der Staatsrechtswissenschaft*, Freiburg 1896, p. 158.

between the common people and the powerful; this results in that mixed form of government which Scipio has been recommending [Cicero's political ideal consists of a mixture of monarchist, aristocratic, and democratic elements, such as the Roman republic had realized in its classical period, and such as we have already outlined in our account of Polybius]; and thus not nature nor desire but weakness is the mother of justice.' <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand we find an observation in Cicero from which it may be concluded that the imaginary and abstract principle of the contract theory—and in this he was a true Roman—must have seemed problematical to him. Thus he makes Scipio express the following sentiment at the beginning of Book II of the *De Republica*: 'Cato used to say that our constitution was superior to those of other States on account of the fact that almost every one of these other commonwealths had been established by *one* man, the author of their laws and institutions. . . . On the other hand our own commonwealth was based upon the genius not of *one* man, but of many; it was founded, not in one generation, but in a long period of several centuries and many ages of men. For . . . there never has lived a man possessed of so great a genius that nothing could escape him, nor could the combined powers of all the men living at one time possibly make all necessary provisions for the future without the aid of actual experience and the test of time.' <sup>2</sup> In this passage the contract theory of the formation of the State is denied validity; it is the specifically Roman traditionalism which is expressed here, and which is perhaps revived in English political thought owing to a similar set of causes, as we have seen.

When, more than eighteen hundred years later, Burke composed his critical work on the French Revolution in whose Declaration of the Rights of Man the idea of the law of nature celebrated its last triumph, it is these traditionalist and organic elements which Burke upheld against the French: the Rights of Man are an abortion begotten of anarchy, for men are by nature unequal; every State has its own national spirit, based on the history and tradition peculiar to it.

Cicero did not reconcile these two important tendencies—the

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *ibid.* p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *ibid.* p. 111 f.

idea of a law of nature and that of an organic national spirit—which have distinguished western political philosophy. But that they were both decisive for his thought explains his permanent greatness. His untimely death is, as it were, a symbol of the dying Roman Republic.

#### 4. FROM THE PRINCIPATE TO ROMA SACRA

In vain did Cicero endeavour to restore the republic after Caesar's death. The idea of the Principate proved too strong. Caesar had recognized the incompatibility of the Roman city-republic with the tasks imposed by a world *imperium*. He did not simply dissipate his power in Egypt in the bed of the beautiful Cleopatra (as historians said of him with somewhat schoolmasterly disapproval), but also perceived there the suitability of Hellenistic monarchy as a form of government for several peoples. Yet Caesar left the form of the Roman Republic untouched, and it was with Caesar's grand-nephew, Octavian, that the era of Roman imperialism began.

Octavian (called Augustus after 27 B.C.) led the *imperium Romanum* to the summit of its power; from Britain to Africa, from Spain to the Euphrates, stretched the *oikoumene* which was ruled by one man, by the Roman emperor, *pater patriae*. This tremendous territory was gradually transformed into one economic unity, in which the wheat of Egypt was exchanged for the silver of Spain. The emperor created a rigid administrative organization at whose head he stood. The importance of the senate decreased perceptibly with each creation of a new province whose administrative officials were appointed by the emperor. 'Only on a firm foundation of political and economic unity was it possible for profound spiritual influences to permeate the whole world with a common outlook, a common view of life; the Greek spirit still predominated, but the Roman character acquired by this very means its own true form.'<sup>1</sup> Not only Cicero, but Caesar and Horace, too, came under the formative influence of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schubart, *Hellenismus und römische Republik*, *Knaurs Weltgeschichte*, Berlin 1935, p. 212.

ancient Hellenistic philosophy. Virgil's *Aeneid* bears witness to the influence of Homer; Lucretius put the nature philosophy of Epicurus into poetry.

The encyclopaedic philosophy of late Hellenism, as taught by Posidonius, was introduced to Roman thought by his pupil Cicero. Its clear, ethical formulation was profoundly suited to the Roman character. 'Virtue can be taught,' wrote Posidonius. And: 'The variant opinions of philosophers should form no reason for renouncing philosophy; for this view would mean the complete failure of life.'<sup>1</sup> Or in another place: 'Philosophy, thou guide through life, thou who leadest on to virtue and banishest vice, what would we be, nay, what would the whole of human life be, without thee! Thou hast founded cities, summoned scattered men to a social life; thou hast bound them together, first through habitation and marriage, and then through word and writing; thou hast given laws, introduced discipline and morality. To thee we fly for refuge, from thee we obtain succour, to thee we devote ourselves . . . completely. One single day lived well and according to thy teaching is to be preferred to a sinful immortality. What means shall we therefore use but thine, thou who hast given us peace in life and taken from us the horror of death?'<sup>2</sup> Let us set this beautiful passage of Posidonius beside Virgil's profound description of the Roman character, in order to realize the whole, convincing power of the Augustan age. Never again was Roman superiority given such expression:

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera—  
credo equidem—vivos ducent de marmore voltus;  
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus  
describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent:  
tu regere imperio populos Romane memento—  
haec tibi erunt artes—pacique imponere morem,  
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.<sup>3</sup>

Our essay, designed merely to describe the structure of the Roman universal principle, cannot proceed to an account of the confusion of the Roman imperial period. Yet a few points, which have indeed already been touched on in the foregoing,

<sup>1</sup> *Diogenis Laertii de vitis*, etc., vii. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cic., *Tusc.* v. ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* vi. 847 ff.

may be mentioned. Under Nero the number of Roman citizens had already risen to six millions. It was therefore only logical that the emperor Tiberius should transfer the selection of officials from the people to the Senate, and should reserve to the ruling house the right of nominating the worthiest. The imperial bureaucracy came to consist more and more of manumitted slaves, and in the army the provincial Romans obtained a preponderating influence. The Roman citizens themselves became increasingly a nation of *rentiers* who dissipated in luxury and pomp the revenues from the provinces which had begun to flourish under Augustus. Trajan (d. 117) stiffened the imperial organization and the senate became, as it were, the parliament of the *imperium*. Finally, in the year 212, Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire. With this there disappeared completely the already rapidly diminishing contrast between the old Roman ruling caste and the rest of the inhabitants of the empire.

▼ From the time of the emperor Commodus (180-92), the empire underwent a severe economic crisis. Only by vigilance, coercion, organization, could the power of the State be preserved. The peasants became bound to the soil; industry and handicraft became subject to State supervision. A hardening, a coarsening of life set in. The militarist, absolutist ideas of the rulers united with the masses' ideas of equality, poverty, labour, and their hope of redemption. Thus the older forms of life finally disintegrated.

Diocletian (284-305) destroyed the last traces of republican Rome. The senate had to surrender all the provinces it administered to the emperor, who now appointed all governors. The empire was divided into twelve administrative districts (*dioceses*). Military and civil power in the provinces were separated from one another. In this way a rigid, unified organization extended over the whole empire. A bureaucratic hierarchy was formed from the emperor's adherents and was reinforced by the army. To this was added a thorough organization of the economic system. Constantine the Great (306-37) founded a new Rome in the east: Constantinople. Under his rule the administrative system of Diocletian was combined with



eastern traditions of State economy. It was Constantine's historical task to ally the Roman State with the Christian Church.

Hitherto we have touched upon Christianity only *en passant*. Thus we have indicated the Christian imprint given to the idea of the law of nature by St Augustine, and the influence of Christian ideas on the Justinian code. Now we must seek to describe the importance of Christianity as a permanent influence in the west. This does not involve discussing the 'truth' of Christianity. One may dispute or accept the 'historical' truth of the Christian teachings of the Gospel. No one, however, is able to dispute that these teachings have shaped and determined western life in a decisive manner right up to the present day. And even if one keeps before one's eyes the great secularizing process which has overtaken Christian ideas since the beginning of modern times, a process in which the distortions of so-called Neo-paganism or of State-organized anti-Christianity form merely the latest ramifications, the ideas of Christianity are imperishable and *must* be imperishable as long as the idea of Europe is to retain any meaning.

As early as in the writings of Philo of Alexandria we encounter an attempt to combine Greek philosophy with the teachings of the Old Testament. We can give here only one example out of many: 'Certain people, who admired the Universe more than they did its Creator, have declared it to have been always existent and eternal and have in error ascribed to God, even if in a pious sense, great inactivity; whereas they ought to have done the reverse, and to have admired his abundance of power as that of the Father and Creator, and should not have glorified the universe beyond measure. Moses, however, who had already previously attained to the highest eminence of philosophy, and who was instructed by oracle about the most important forces holding together the phenomena of nature, recognized that the most fundamental law in the world is that there is, on the one hand, an active force as cause, and on the other, something on which this acts; and further, that this active force is the clearest and purest Reason in the universe, which is mightier than virtue, mightier than knowledge, and mightier than the good and noble itself. That, however, upon which it acts, is without soul and

incapable of movement of its own accord; it was, however, given motion and form and soul by Reason, and was thus transformed into the most perfect work, into this world.'<sup>1</sup> Even as in the philosophy of Philo the Greek doctrine of the *nous* as the Unmoved Mover was read into the Old Testament, so was the message of Jesus merged with Hellenistic philosophy. It was more than any other the system of Plotinus (205-70) that achieved this adjustment. God is experienced in what we may term vision, in the *ekstasis*. Although he rests within himself, the multiplicity of the world emanates from him in an ordered hierarchy. It is, as it were, the late Roman system of government which reappears in Plotinus' cosmology. The origin and end of all life—in plant, in animal, in man—springs from and is determined by this divine, universal lordship. The emanatory concept of God in Plotinus later exercised a profound influence on St Augustine's Christian philosophy. Some of those fundamental definitions of Plotinus' which were of extreme importance for western thought may be given here verbatim: 'The difficulty lies chiefly in the fact that the One cannot be comprehended either by means of science or by means of thought, as things spiritual usually can be, but only by the presence of something that stands higher than knowledge. . . . Science is based on the concept, and the concept is something that is multiple. Therefore the soul fails to be the One, because it descends into number and multiplicity. It must therefore rise above knowledge and may in no way depart from the vision of the beautiful. For everything beautiful is subsequent to the One and springs from it, like daylight from the sun. Therefore Plato also says that the One is inexpressible and indescribable. We therefore speak and write of it only in order to guide the spirit to it and to awaken it from conceptual thought to vision, and so to prepare the way, as it were, for him who wants to attain to vision.'<sup>2</sup> The Neoplatonism of Plotinus became the dominant doctrine in the third century at the very time that Christianity was acquiring increasing importance.

It is idle, in a work written from a sociological point of view, to speculate on the historicity of Jesus. His profound and

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *De Mund.*, op. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Plotinus, *Enn.* vi. 9, 4.

permanent influence is certain. His Gospel of neighbourly love, of faith and humility, of redemption and resurrection, as described in the synoptic Gospels with belief and simplicity, has been a blessed consolation to men of all ages, but especially for them that 'travail and are heavy laden,' for the poor, for those exploited by late Roman State absolutism. The Gospel of St Mark, which reveals Jesus Christ in His most human aspect, tells of the Jewish craftsman who learns on his earthly path of suffering that he is the son of God. The synoptic Gospels, and even more the Gospel of St John which is strongly coloured by gnostic mythology, together with the passionate preaching of St Paul, bore into the world the glad message to an oppressed mankind that yearned for a simple and heartening faith.

The message of Jesus was the proclamation that God's kingdom on earth, the kingdom of love, was at hand. Whoever believed was assured of God's love. The relationship of men with one another was to be determined only by neighbourly love; the evil that was done unto us was to be repaid only with good. God would be the portion of *all* the faithful, even though the poor and simple would find the path to the kingdom of heaven easier than the rich.✓ The fundamental religious universalism of the Gospels stands in clear affinity to the Stoic ethic if we recall Cicero's theory of society. As regards the State, the message of Jesus reveals a definite caution: 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' The preaching of Jesus contains an ethical conviction which avoids all conflict with the Roman political authority. 'Ye know,' it is written in St Mark, 'ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'<sup>1</sup> It was the historical task of St Paul to lead Christianity away from its originally sectarian character. He became the great apostle of Jesus amongst the heathens, the powerful first

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 42-5.

organizer of the Christian communities that were crystallizing around the original groups.

St Paul, educated as a Greek, reveals an attitude essentially more political than the communistic doctrine of love in the Gospels. ✓ Ethical universalism is replaced by the principle of election by grace, without, of course, ethical universalism's being rejected. But with the introduction of the principle of election by grace St Paul introduces an eminently realistic motive which made possible assimilation with complicated late Roman actualities. Ethical universalism, as a religious moral conviction which had overcome contrasts of race, people, and nation and had therefore succeeded in influencing the *oikoumene* of the late Roman Empire, opposing an inner kingdom of the spirit to the power of the external domination of the emperor, thus became a postulate. It was not the deeds and works of a man that could ensure redemption for him from his state of original sin, but the grace of God alone which chose him out and made him a candidate for the heavenly kingdom. At the same time the principle of election by grace defined the attitude towards Jewry, as the 'chosen people.' Thus is it written in the Epistle to the Romans: 'Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying: "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." But what saith the answer of God unto him? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.' <sup>1</sup> ¶ The principle of election by grace has played a tremendous and revolutionizing role in the history of Christianity; with its revival in Calvin it determined English puritanism, and it was beneath its banner that the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to the New World.

A further step was taken by St Paul in the application of Christianity to this world, in that he viewed the Christian relationship to the powers that be in an essentially more positive way

<sup>1</sup> Romans xi. 1-5.

than is to be found in the Gospels. Thus he says (again in his Epistle to the Romans): 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . . . Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. . . . Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill . . ."; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'<sup>1</sup> Jewish prophetism, the ethical conviction of universalism in the Gospels, the Pauline principle of election by grace in combination with a firm relationship to the realities of political life, which in its turn might again be moulded according to Christian standards, have fashioned Christianity as the main force determining western thought.

The victory of Christendom over manifold sects and cults was determined at that time by two factors: firstly by the political *oikoumene* of the universal Roman Empire, which had deprived all the national religions of their foundations through its integrating character; and secondly by the superiority of Christianity as regards organization. By the end of the third century Christianity already possessed an organization extending throughout the empire, within which all the Christian communities were fairly strongly linked with one another. Each of these communities had, as Ranke ingeniously observes, 'a kind of self-government'; and furthermore, 'the heads of these communities, the *episcopi*, met together and ultimately decided that the Holy Ghost was present in their gathering.'<sup>2</sup> As early as the

<sup>1</sup> Romans xiii. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte,' in *Geschichte und Politik*, ed. H. Hofmann, Leipzig 1936, p. 167.

beginning of the third century the leaders of the Christian communities were struggling for a unified episcopal power, a struggle which issued in the bishop's becoming the repository of spiritual power as head of the Christian communities within the jurisdiction of the *civitas*, that is, within the political unity. The bishop of a community represented in the spiritual sphere what the metropolitan of a province represented in Diocletian's secular organization of the empire. With this there was laid down the condition most necessary for the assimilation of the Church to the organization of the Roman State, and as soon as the emperor surrendered the claim to be regarded as a god a fundamental compromise between Church and State was made possible. The emperor Gratian, however, went further, and in 383 renounced the title of *pontifex maximus*, which had till then been borne by all emperors. Constantine cleverly manipulated the imperial organization of the Church, so that by absorbing it into the structure of the State the State itself should be strengthened. From the year 321 the Church was granted the right of accepting testamentary gifts, and by this means it very soon acquired a tremendously strong economic position—the material foundation of its spiritual power.

A deep-seated conflict between the Arian and Athanasian creeds, in which the dogma of equality in essence of God the Father and God the Son was opposed by that of their mere similarity in essence, was settled by Constantine at the Council of Nicaea, which took place in 325 under his presidency. This council laid down the principles of the organization of the Church as a whole: patriarchates were established in the east, whilst in the west the predominance of the Roman bishop grew increasingly stronger. An imperial law of the year 445 placed the supreme judicial and legislative power of the Church in the hands of the Apostolic Chair in Rome. The Court patriarch in Constantinople was always subject to the power of the eastern Roman emperor. Therefore, whenever it seemed to them politically expedient, the eastern Roman rulers sought to play him off against the Roman bishop—an important factor which finally determined the schism of the Church into Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic.

The unity of the west, however, was moulded by the Catholic Church in Rome.

One more feature needs to be indicated: already with St Paul the Church had been regarded as an organism. The Catholic theology of the Fathers, the so-called patristics, continued along these lines. Gierke has described the results of their work (in so far as it is of importance in our connection) in the following manner: 'Just as antique theory regarded the State, so Christian theology regarded the Church, as a living organism, as an independent and united whole. Here, however, the organic way of thinking received a new religious and mystical content. It utilized the figure of a body informed with a soul in a sense far beyond that which similar conceptions of ancient philosophy had ever reached. Especially there was added to the whole, as its transcendent centre, a living spiritual unity, while each member retained a value of its own, a special personality. The relation of the whole to its parts and of the parts to one another was conceived as an entirely reciprocal relationship; the principles of unity and of multiplicity were here regarded as equally real and equally necessary elements of the all-embracing Divine Being.'<sup>1</sup> The Church had absorbed the ancient Hellenistic heritage into its doctrine, which was no longer the Gospel of the lowly and oppressed: from the beginning of the fifth century profession of the Christian religion was a necessity for any one wishing to occupy an office in the Roman State.

In the figure of St Augustine the ancient Roman epoch reappears—in order, as it were, to take farewell; for simultaneously the new motives of the Middle Ages make themselves heard. St Augustine is at once a perfecter of the old and a precursor of the new: veritably a man at the turning-point of an age.

As a highly gifted youth Augustine studied rhetoric and philosophy and very soon came under the sway of Cicero's philosophy, which made a marked impression on him, its influence losing none of its hold even after his conversion. In his Milan period—he taught rhetoric at the university there—he was converted to Catholic Christianity through the influence

<sup>1</sup> *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, vol. iii, p. 108 f.

of Bishop Ambrose.<sup>4</sup> St Augustine was strongly influenced by Manichaeism, a sect which harked back to the Persian doctrine of Zarathustra and was revived in Babylon, outside the Roman Empire, by Mani in the first half of the third century. Manichaeism, which in its earlier form had already strongly stirred Judaism in the second century B.C. and had played no small part in preparing it for the acceptance of Christianity, combined within itself the doctrine of the physical character of all being with the postulation of a principle of good and evil. St Augustine, however, abandoned Manichaeism when in 385 he became acquainted with the writings of Plotinus. Into Plotinus' doctrine of unity Augustine introduced, as a new element, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. By making the *Logos* identical in essence with Plotinus' First Being, the Platonic Ideas could be reinterpreted as the thoughts of God, who had already been conceived of in Plotinus as an eternal, spiritual light. Only through this light—comparable to the relationship of sensual perception to the sun—are logical, ethical, ontological, aesthetic and mathematical truths made known to us. Only if we surrender ourselves to God with our whole will shall we participate in these truths. By submerging himself in his deepest, innermost being with its dynamic understanding (an act impossible of accomplishment for the ancient mind, which looked outwards), St Augustine overcame the sceptic philosophy of late antiquity: for the existence of doubt of oneself becomes for us, in inner experience, a source of certainty. And in this inner certainty we experience God, whose eternal providence is the origin of everything. No dogma is more certain than the one: 'Deus enim veritas est.' All truths—like the truth that three times three is nine—are eternally valid. They all possess the same essence: the truth of God. /

Never again in the history of the western mind has this strength of introversion been attained. The *Confessions* of St Augustine are therefore to-day as vivid as they ever were. Let us look at its language, its exhortation, and its message of consolation: 'And men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, the mighty billows of the sea, the broad tides of the rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars, and pass



themselves by; nor wonder, that when I spake of all these things, I did not see them with mine eyes, yet could not have spoken of them, unless I actually saw the mountains, billows, rivers, stars, which I had seen, and that ocean which I believe to be, inwardly in my memory, and that, with the same vast spaces between, as if I saw them abroad. Yet did not I by seeing draw them into myself, when with mine eyes I beheld them; nor are they themselves with me, but their images only. And I know by what sense of the body, each was impressed upon me.’<sup>1</sup> Here is expressed a new humility of subjectivity, destined to stir profoundly the man of the Middle Ages.

A few remarks as to St Augustine’s conception of the relationship of State and society may be added here. His ideas on this subject have been laid down in his work, *De Civitate Dei*. There it is written: ‘And the vulture, even though it ever hovers for prey alone, does it not yet take unto itself a mate, build a nest, hatch out eggs, feed its young and maintain, so to speak, a domestic community with its housewife, as well as it understands, in peace? How much the more, then, is man impelled by the law of nature, as it were, to enter into social relationships and to maintain peace, so far as he can, with all men; since even the wicked strive for the peace of their own, and if they could, would make all their own, so that one should rule over all and everything; which thing can only be attained by men agreeing to live in peace with others, voluntarily or through fear.’<sup>2</sup> St Augustine reproduces here a train of thought which has already engaged our attention in Cicero. Yet in the same work the saint expressly refutes the political theory of Cicero: ‘Therefore here is the proper place to bring forward . . . proof, with the greatest possible brevity and clarity, that Rome was never a republic, if we begin with the definitions which Scipio uses in Cicero, in the work on the republic. He defines the concept of republic, briefly, as being “a thing of the people” (*vox populi*). If this definition is right, then the Roman empire was never a republic, because it was never a thing of the people. . . . He defines the term

<sup>1</sup> *The Confessions of St Augustine*, trans. W. E. B. Pusey, Everyman ed., p. 212 f.

<sup>2</sup> *De Civitate Dei*, xix. 12.

"people" as an association of men bound together by legal contract and community of interests. What he means by legal contract he explains in the course of his inquiry, and shows thereby that a State cannot be governed without justice. Where, therefore, true justice is lacking, there can also be no law. For what takes place according to law, takes place obviously in a just manner; what, on the other hand, takes place in an unjust manner, cannot take place according to law. Unjust ordinances made by men, however, cannot be said or held to be law; even in the view of the exponents of the world State [Augustine refers here to the Stoic philosophers] only that can be regarded as law which flows from this source of justice, and the opinion often expressed by men of false judgment that law is that which is advantageous to the stronger, is erroneous. Where, therefore, true justice is lacking, there can be no association of men bound together by legal contract and therefore no people, in the sense of the definition of Scipio or Cicero, and therefore there can be no talk of a "thing of the people," but at the most of a thing of some multitude for which the name people would be much too good. Yet the following indisputable conclusion results: if the republic is a "thing of the people" and the definition of the people involves a union by legal contract, and if law is only to be found where justice is, there can, therefore, be no talk of a republic where justice is lacking.<sup>1</sup> Only in the City of God can justice prevail.

##### 5. CAUSES OF ROMAN DECADENCE

Augustine lived at the turn of the age. Whether the saint was conscious of this is difficult to determine. When the murderous bands of Alaric despoiled Rome, Augustine wrote in sermon 81: 'To our eternal reproach, Rome is perishing, I answer, perhaps Rome is not perishing, perhaps it is merely kept hostage, not killed, perhaps it is being scourged, not destroyed.' This passage certainly permits us to conclude that the spirit of decline in the Roman Empire must have been generally widespread at that time. In fact, Rome was doomed to decline.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. xix. 21.

The causes of this decline of an ancient culture must be recounted briefly, and to do this we follow closely the researches of Max Weber.

Ancient culture was a slave culture. The slave-trade was its natural foundation. It was a trade which produced on the one hand for the market, on the other for home consumption. Thus, the wars waged by Rome were to a large extent slave-hunts. The economics of transport at that time always had a substructure of a natural economy, which was bound to spread when new slave material ceased to enter the Roman Empire in appreciable quantity after the cessation of the wars of conquest under Tiberius. This was a real consequence of the Roman defeat in the Teutoburg Forest; slave-marriage and ownership of property by slaves had to be permitted; the influence of Christianity, moreover, strengthened the monogamist tendency in this connection.

The slaves became unfree peasants, whilst the Roman *coloni* declined into dependent cultivators. The landed proprietors stood above both these social strata. It is very truly therefore, in view of the conditions described, that Weber observes: 'The development of a feudal society was already in the air in the late Roman Empire. For it is obvious that, in this late imperial seigneurialism, with the existence side by side of two categories of peasants subject to compulsory labour . . . we already have before us the type of the *medieval manor*. To produce *for export* with forced labour under the transport conditions of antiquity was an impossibility. The disciplined slave-barrack was a necessary condition for production for the market.'<sup>1</sup> Thus commerce continued to decline and natural economy became more and more the basis of the economic system. The landed proprietors left the cities and withdrew to their estates and a coarsening of life set in. We have already touched on this above. A further serious result of the drying up of the supply of slaves was the scarcity of soldiers. The landed proprietors refused to free their peasants for recruiting. Therefore barbarians had to be increasingly employed in the Roman army—the very same barbarians who were envious of Roman land and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Max Weber, *ibid.* p. 303.

Roman luxury. These barbarian armies, however, could certainly not maintain the frontiers of the Roman *imperium*. Nor did they want to. The strength of the *imperium Romanum* was exhausted and political leadership of the west passed over to the younger peoples of the north.

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### CHAPTER III

## THE CULTURAL UNITY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

### I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

THERE was no more holding back the flood of the oncoming German peoples. The Roman Empire collapsed. From the year 476 Odovacar ruled in Italy, though still formally acknowledged by the emperor in the east. He was followed by Theodoric the Great.

We have already given a brief account of the economic causes of the breakdown of the Roman Empire. The prevailing natural economy of the later Roman period continued into the Middle Ages. The tendency towards such an economy was strengthened from the seventh century onwards by the victorious expansion of the Arabs. Even so cautious an economic historian as Pirenne has rightly written: 'It was only the abrupt entry of Islam on the scene, in the course of the seventh century, and its conquest of the eastern, southern, and western shores of the great European lake, which altered the position, with consequences which were to influence the whole course of subsequent history. . . . The economic equilibrium of antiquity, which had survived the Germanic invasions, collapsed under the invasion of Islam. . . . The empire of Charlemagne . . . was essentially a land empire. . . . And from this fundamental fact there necessarily sprang a new economic order which is peculiar to the early Middle Ages.' <sup>1</sup> Not until the eleventh century was the power of the Arabs definitely broken; after that there was again a rising curve of 'international' commerce.

Only if one bears in mind the natural economic structure of the early Middle Ages is an adequate understanding of medieval political and social problems possible. The continuity of late Roman economic institutions was, however, not only preserved

<sup>1</sup> *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, London 1936, p. 2 f.

in Italy, but also in Gaul and in the other former Roman provinces. The new German lords stepped into the place of the Roman landlords; the princes of the Church, especially, who in Gallic territory were to a large extent still related to the Roman nobility by family ties, became instruments in the continuity of the later Roman economic system as well as of the highly developed Roman administration. The period of the 'Völkerwanderung' was thus by no means so chaotic on the whole as we are accustomed to learn at school. It is to the penetrating researches of the Viennese scholar, Alfons Dopsch, that we are indebted for having at our disposal to-day a fairly reliable account of the economic development of these centuries. For decades historical scholarship was unable to reconcile the institution of common ownership in the early German economy with the fact of the prevalence of manorialism in the Carolingian period. Once the continuity of later Roman economic institutions has been realized, however, this difficulty is overcome, except for those subtle particular problems which can only be discussed in specialized works on economic history.

Common land, individual peasantry, and seigneurial estates existed side by side in an historical connection which is made clear to us by documentary sources. The dim and doubtful beginnings of the Germano-Roman peoples lie *completely* outside our inquiry.

The Frankish kingdom was the first large polity to have any lasting influence in the early Middle Ages. When Clovis went over to Catholic Christianity the ground was prepared for the absorption of the Church into the substance of the Frankish State; apart from this, an important fact in the formation of the Gallo-Frank State is the circumstance that the Gallo-Franks conquered their land without first having had to crystallize out of the seething kettle of the 'Völkerwanderung.' With Charles Martel's victory over the Arabs in 732, the latter's advance was brought to a stop, and the Germano-Roman form of culture in the west was enabled to become a reality.

The institution of the mayoralty of the palace in the Merovingian period was the centre from which the State of Charlemagne crystallized. The old imperial army became an army of retainers. Each of the large landowners, who were in their turn vassals of

the king in the old German fashion, recruited retainers from their estates with whom they marched to battle. These armies were no longer, as in former times, armed with light javelins and swords, but were a much more heavily armed cavalry force. The kernel of the Frankish army was thus the medieval *knight*. The king obtained the services of his vassals by enfeoffing them with land. The greater feudatories again distributed parts of their land as subfiefs (fief is the Latin *feudum*—old German *feod*—which means food). In this way arose the feudal system which bound the king and his magnates and the vassals of the latter, in their turn, by a bond of mutual service and fealty in one graded hierarchy. The medieval heroic epics—the songs of Roland, the Nibelungs, and of Gudrun—have handed down to us the spirit of this system of lordship.

✓Of course this medieval State was not yet a State in the modern sense. It lacked firstly the institution of a rationalized common law, permeating and embracing all spheres of life; and secondly the members of the State lacked the national feeling that is peculiar to the modern nation State. Its very controversial structure has been characterized with acumen by one of the best medieval scholars, Georg von Below, as follows: 'If communal aims can be proved to exist in the medieval kingdom, then we have here a State. The existence of communal aims is the characteristic feature of the State. The aims of the medieval State stand out clearly as follows: Firstly the maintenance of law and order; the ruler upholds peace in the kingdom, regards it as an obligation to help his subjects to attain their rights, and seeks to suppress crime. In the oath which he takes at his coronation, he promises to strengthen justice, to weaken injustice. . . . Allied to the aim of the maintenance of law and order is the defence of the country through the king's office as leader of the army. This implies at the same time international relations, decisions of war and peace, representation abroad. . . . A third aim of the medieval kingdom appears in the claims of religious and ecclesiastical affairs. In the oath sworn by the king at his coronation, he promises to preserve and encourage the true faith, to be a protector and defender of Holy Church and her servants.' <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, Leipzig 1924, p. 8.

We have already hinted at the significance of the Christian character of the Frankish State. In the eighth century the bond between Church and State was still more closely tied. Anglo-Saxon monks carried the Catholic faith into the German and Frankish countries. The most important of these was Boniface. He not only became the founder of the German Church, but he also reformed and organized the Frankish ecclesiastical system at the instance of the Pope as papal legate. From the hand of Boniface, Pepin, the first Carolingian, received in 751 the religious consecration of his kingship. We must be quite clear at this point that the sociological character of the early medieval Church differed essentially from that of the imperial Church of the later Roman Empire. The Church of the later Roman Empire, in which Roman universalism, the traditions of the Stoa, and of Christianity were united, as we saw, into a unity that was to influence world history, was broken up into *territorial churches* in the different countries. 'That, too, was a State Church system, but it was quite different from that of the east, since it was based, not on the strength of the State, but on that inward interpermeation of the sacred and the secular which first gave to the State its power and its civilizing mission; the result for the Church therefore differed greatly from Byzantinism.'<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the Frankish kingdom gave the Church a national character made possible the development of ecclesiastical vassalage, thereby feudalizing the Church; this was to be a fact of paramount importance later in the Middle Ages in the struggles between Pope and Emperor. The relationship of the State to the Pope was limited to conventional respect and the recognition of the unity of Christendom. Not until the tenth century, after the German monarchy had risen to be a universal empire, was the universal idea of the Church revived once again.

We need not concern ourselves here with describing the organization of the Carolingian kingdom, which was a remarkably rigid one. Of extreme importance were the efforts of Charlemagne to improve the culture of his wide territories. That he used, and had to use, the Church for this purpose is obvious. From Ireland he summoned Alcuin of York, the

<sup>1</sup> E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, London 1931, p. 215.



greatest scholar of his time, who administered the palace school and endeavoured to revive in the kingdom of the Franks the literature of antiquity so far as it was known in the Britain of the early Middle Ages. From Italy was summoned Paul the Deacon, and from Spain Theodulf the Goth. In these countries the tradition of ancient scholarship had never completely died out. Let us try to give a brief idea of how far the ancient tradition was still alive from the eighth to the eleventh century.

A glance at the writings of Alcuin's pupil, John Scotus Erigena, with whom philosophy in England reached its first eminence, reveals to us that of Plato only the *Timaeus* was known, and of Aristotle only his writings on the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione Philosophiae*, which is to be reckoned amongst the most widely read works of the Middle Ages. Then, of course, the writings of St Augustine—the *De Civitate Dei* was the favourite book of Charlemagne—from which Scotus obtained influential Neoplatonic ideas even before he became acquainted with the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius. Of the classical Roman authors he certainly must have known Pliny, Virgil, and Cicero. Pliny's *Natural History* determined medieval thought to a very large extent until the scientific writings of Aristotle became known and Arabic science penetrated into Europe. Scotus was also influenced by the Fathers; of the patristic writings, mention must be made especially of the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville (died 636). This work exercised an almost unbounded influence from Carolingian times onwards. 'One can say that there is hardly any medieval work in which ancient or biblical matters find a place which does not use Isidore.'<sup>1</sup> The *Etymologies* is divided up according to subject-matter; first the seven liberal arts are treated, serving as a plan for monastic education. The *Trivium* included grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. In the *Quadrivium* arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy were taught. The *Etymologies* goes on to deal with medicine, law, theology, languages, and politics; there are also sections on man, animals, agriculture, etc.

With a knowledge of these cultural conditions we can now

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Munich 1911, p. 66.

proceed to give a sketch—of course only in outline—of Scotus Erigena's philosophy, so that we may obtain an idea of the general content of philosophic thought at that time. His chief work is called *De Divisione Naturae*, which he wrote in 867. His mind is chiefly concerned with two problems. First he investigates the relationship between revelation, authority, and intellect: 'Omnis autem auctoritas quae vera ratione non approbatur, infirma videtur esse. Vera autem ratio, quoniam suis virtutibus rata atque immutabilis munitur, nullius auctoritatis ad stipulatione roborari indiget.'<sup>1</sup> Only that by which the reason is convinced, and whose content is by nature comprehensible and lets itself be understood, can be regarded as true. Both *vera auctoritas* and *vera ratio* are made by Scotus to flow from a divine source: 'Ex uno fonte, divina scilicet sapientia, manare dubium non est.' All revealed truth, Scotus taught, can be so displayed as to correspond to perception by reason. The second main theory which we find in Scotus is concerned with a fourfold gradation of being, which is strongly influenced by Neoplatonism: *natura quae creat et non creatur*, i.e. God; then: *natura creata creans*, whereby Scotus understands the primary ideas created by God and contained in the *Logos*, the *causae primordiales* from which by a continual process we arrive at the *natura creata non creans*, the things of the world. God remains immanent in these things, knowledge of them arising from a self-revelation of God. Finally all things return again to God as *natura quae nec creatur nec creat*, where they then eternally rest. Scotus's influence on later medieval philosophy was very important; its effect is to be seen reaching on through the mysticism of the later Middle Ages to Spinoza and Hegel. The Church condemned his chief work to be ceremonially burnt in the thirteenth century, because it very rightly saw both in Scotus's theory of reason and in his theory of emanation a doctrine that endangered the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

The empire of Charlemagne split up under his successors—less because of the inefficiency of his heirs than on account of the assimilation of the hitherto unified Frankish imperial nobility to

<sup>1</sup> *De Divisione Naturae*, i. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Henry Bett, *Johannes Scotus Erigena, a Study in Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1925.

the ways of life, language, and customs of the territories conquered by them. It is to the credit of the Church alone that the imperial tradition of Charlemagne was able to be preserved at all. Christopher Dawson describes this early medieval period in the following way: 'On the one hand there was the peace-society of the Church, which was centred in the monasteries and episcopal cities and inherited the tradition of later Roman culture. And, on the other hand, there was the war-society of the feudal nobility and their following, whose life was spent in incessant wars and private feuds.'<sup>1</sup> The weaker the empire became the more importance did the papacy acquire as upholder of the slowly growing European Christian unity.

Nationalities arose on the soil of the Frankish kingdom—French and German. The sociology of language has hitherto neglected to devote the necessary attention to the important processes involved in the origin of nationalities, which we cannot really call nations in the modern sense until the variously formed language-groups of people have been organized into a firm government. It is to be hoped that this defect will soon be remedied and that historical sociology will then be able to use profitably the results of these researches.

Under Otto the Great (936–73) the recently formed German kingdom continued the forms of organization that had distinguished the Carolingian administration. Bishops and imperial abbots were granted lands and rights, and finally whole counties, firstly because the danger from ambitious tribal dukes could thereby be checked, and secondly because these fiefs could be repeatedly granted out again by the king after the death of the clerical tenant and thus became effective instruments of power.

In 962 Otto had himself crowned emperor by the Pope. In this act the Christian and universal tendency of the young German empire attained its consummation. The Pope, however, still remained an imperial bishop dependent on the emperor, in accordance with the national Church tendency which we have already described. 'Roman memories and Carolingian traditions, the expansion of power, as it were, into the airy spaces of a politically torn but desirable land of ancient culture, the ideas of

<sup>1</sup> *The Making of Europe*, London 1935, p. 270.

Otto's ecclesiastical officials and their desire not to permit their supreme ecclesiastical head the . . . papacy, which had its seat outside Germany, to become the plaything of foreign influences, Otto's own wish to absorb it into his system—all this acted powerfully upon Otto's personal inclinations to determine the history of the west for centuries.' <sup>1</sup>

In the so-called Ottonian renaissance the centre of civilization began to shift from France to Germany; an intellectual and artistic culture arose which showed a strong native flavour in the Romanesque architecture of the Saxon empire as well as in the dramas of the nun Hrotswitha, which were written in the style of Terence.

The 'Ottonian system,' as it has been called, reached its perfection under the Salian Henry III (1039-56). The tremendous political power of the emperor was able once again to influence election to the papal throne. Following Hampe, we may describe the social structure of this period of German history as follows: Germany continued throughout this period with little-changed social conditions, wherein a still economically active stratum of feudal landowners dominated a peasantry that was dependent but by no means completely weaned from military exercises. But the lower strata which had their origin among the peasantry, namely the unfree *ministeriales*, were visibly rising to form a class of their own. In the cities and market-towns of the older west and south where the tradition of the Roman Empire still continued to exert its influence, a new life full of promise for the future began to stir, but even in these cities, since they were for the most part under the domination of episcopal lords, it did not yet disrupt the seignorial aristocratic framework.

And yet, as a result of the Cluniac movement, a split between empire and papacy had been for a long time preparing. Cardinal Humbert gave the cue in his treatise, *Contra Simoniacos* (1058). Simony means the granting of ecclesiastical preferment for payment of money or other material benefit. Humbert desired to withdraw the whole of Church property from the control of secular manorial lords. Under Pope Nicholas II the Lateran

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Karl Hampe, 'Blüte und Verfall des Mittelalters,' in *Knaurs Weltgeschichte*, Berlin 1935, p. 337.

Council of 1059 decided therefore that future papal elections should be in the hands of the cardinals. This opened up the investiture contest. The great conflict between empire and papacy began.

Not only did Gregory VII work with ruthless determination for the reform of the Church from within by demanding clerical celibacy and the abolition of simony; but he it was who effectively revived the idea of the Universal Church under the leadership of the Pope, and he conducted the struggle with the secular powers with relentless energy. Thus in the eleventh century the tradition of Roman centralization was again brought to life. Taking his stand upon Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and the so-called pseudo-Isidorian *Decretals*, which had originated in the ninth century and served as a model for a codification of canon law<sup>1</sup> that was only made in the twelfth century (*Decretum Gratiani*), Gregory drew up his chief demands.

Gregory VII lays it down that the Pope is the supreme head of the Universal Church. He can appoint and depose bishops, and to him alone belongs the right of summoning an Ecumenical Council. The Pope is also the supreme head of the world. He wears the imperial insignia and the princes must kiss his feet; further, he can depose the emperor and release his subjects from their oath of allegiance if necessary. Gregory sums up the relation of emperor to papacy in a bold picture: even as the moon receives light from the sun, so does the emperor receive light from the Pope. The Church has never erred, Gregory goes on to say, nor will it ever err. His conscience lays on him the necessity of a ruthless struggle against the enemies of St Peter. This meant, of course, that the emperor would be in danger of losing his most important officials if the Church forbade him under pain of heavy penalty from participating in the appointment of papal prelates. Even had Gregory VII been finally vanquished in his struggle with Henry IV, the demand for a new universal and ecclesiastical world order had begun its victorious progress.

<sup>1</sup> We cannot here deal with the sociologically significant growth of canon law. It deserves the closest study especially in connection with a sociology of Scholasticism, a subject to which Honigsheim has made a valuable contribution. Cf. P. Honigsheim, 'Zur Soziologie der mittelalterlichen Scholastik,' in *Hauptprobleme der Soziologie, Erinnerungsgabe für Max Weber*, Munich 1923, vol. II.

## 2. THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

The crusading movement which began simultaneously with this struggle at the close of the eleventh century and aimed at freeing the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel, gave the Church an opportunity of testing its spiritual power on the widest possible basis. The sociological significance of the Crusades has often been described. It will suffice to mention here that through them east and west entered upon a period of close cultural exchange which was to supplement the Arabic philosophy and science that had already made its entry into Europe from Moslem Spain. New needs in the way of luxuries and other amenities of life made their appearance. The long absence of feudal lords resulted in far-reaching economic changes: an international trade grew up, the medieval city changed its fundamentally feudal character of the early Middle Ages, and the hierarchically organized medieval city of craftsmen and merchants arose.

The extension of the feudal system to those parts of their land which had hitherto been exploited by the manorial lords themselves, resulted in a visible decline of manorial self-sufficiency. The unwanted villeins wandered away to the cities, which increasingly lost their market character, becoming transformed into towns where the community very soon successfully attempted to give to the trades and handicrafts within their walls an independent constitution that gradually managed to establish itself against the feudal powers. We cannot here deal in detail with the historical origins of guild organization in the cities. Gierke and Max Weber have analysed the juristic character of the medieval cities in penetrating researches.<sup>1</sup>

The new needs resulted in a new occupational specialization which was of fundamental influence in determining the economic and social organization of the medieval town. Only a few examples may be mentioned here. 'Beside the pig-butcher there appears the ox-butcher. In leather-work there is a distinction between cordwainers, saddlers, and girdlers. And particularly fine is the specialization in smith's work. In addition to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. O. von Gierke, *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, Berlin 1881, especially vol. iii, and M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 514 ff.

nail-smiths, the tin-smiths, the shoe-smiths, and the knife-smiths, there are the spurriers, the bell-makers, the sword-smiths, the makers of helms, and the makers of harness, the latter again divided into those who make plate-armour and those who make chain-mail.' <sup>1</sup> The guilds were manufacturing and craft organizations from which the executive and administration of the commune were formed. Little by little the merchant guild, which in the beginning still possessed a handicraft character, acquired an exceptional position and often came into conflict with other guild organizations. In Florence, as the example of the Medici shows, its members became lords of the city. The rise from apprentice to journeyman and to master, the purchase of raw materials, the means of production, the organization of sales—all these were subject to detailed regulation, even although in practice the regulations were often broken, thereby giving rise to severe friction.

From the thirteenth century onwards we notice a visible quickening in the *tempo* of medieval urban economy. The endeavour to evade the ecclesiastical prohibition of interest resulted in the development of the system of so-called 'rent-purchase,' by which is meant the handing over of a sum of money in return for the right to a permanent rent from the soil. Almost simultaneously arose capitalist enterprise. This was made possible chiefly by the strong urgency of distant commerce. With the beginning of capitalist enterprise the 'proletarian' movements of the Middle Ages sprang into being, leading to dangerous risings in Florence and Genoa in the fourteenth century.

From the middle of the twelfth century we encounter in Genoa the institutions of the *societas* and *commenda*, by which capitalists staying at home entrusted money to merchants setting out on profitable ventures. Money-changers became the instruments of traffic in money; but double-entry bookkeeping, in which the essential, calculating capitalism attained its developed form, only began to grow slowly in the fifteenth century.

The forms of capitalism were fully known in the later Middle Ages and a new dynamism revealed itself in social life; but the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Sieveking, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Berlin 1935, p. 71.

inviolable order of estates, whose true protector was the Church, still prevailed, even though the latter contributed not a little to the establishment of institutions of money-economy since the Popes often entrusted merchants with the gathering of Church taxes. It was in this way that the Florentine bankers first came to England as papal tax-collectors.

The medieval order of society was based on estates and was thus a continuation of Greek and Roman sociological institutions. In a letter of St Hildegard of the twelfth century the medieval order of estates is well described: 'God orders every man, so that the lower estate shall not raise itself above the higher, as once did Satan and the first man, who sought to rise above their estates. And what man puts all his beasts into *one* stable: oxen, asses, sheep, goats? For then much evil would ensue from this mingling! Thus care must also be taken that not all people shall be thrown together into one herd. . . . Else an evil confusion of morals would set in; men would rend one another in mutual hatred if the higher estate should be degraded to the lower and the lower raised to the higher. God divides His people on earth into different estates, just as His angels in heaven are divided into different groups, angels and archangels . . . cherubim and seraphim. And God loves them all!'<sup>1</sup>

The tension which had existed in early Christendom between life in this world and asceticism, was resolved into unity by the Church of the Middle Ages. The contrast between *civitas terrena* and *civitas Dei*, as taught by St Augustine, was removed in the perfected system of the medieval world. The medieval unity of culture emerged as a new stage in western world-consciousness. The estates were united as being mutually supplementary within the organism of the Church, wherein monastic asceticism supplied the element of other-worldliness while the life of the laity was brought more into line with asceticism. Troeltsch has interpreted the sociological structure of the medieval order of society very aptly: 'Within the decaying Roman Empire, despite all political upheavals, the main obstacle was still the persistence of the ancient idea of the State, the domination of a law which had

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in A. von Martin, 'Kultursoziologie des Mittelalters,' in *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie*, Stuttgart 1931, p. 380.



once controlled all human relationships, the administration of a rationalizing bureaucracy, and, finally, the influence of a money economy which, though its force was spent, still exerted a secularizing effect. This obstacle continued even when the ancient pagan religious system had been destroyed. The Middle Ages, on the other hand, had no conception of the State at all, in either the ancient or the modern sense of the word. Medieval economic life was based on agriculture; there was, therefore, no official class, or, rather, officials were paid in landed property. . . . The military organization in particular, since it was impossible to use the old military levies for wars in distant lands, and for longer periods, was bound up with this system of fiefdom. . . . This explains why the military class, and, later on, the knightly class, became distinct from the peasant and *bourgeois* sections of the population. There thus arose two main classes within the State with the Church and its clergy forming a third . . . so that the ancient popular community of nobles and free peasants was transformed into an artificially restricted and most complicated . . . system of feudal tenure, controlled by the authority of king and emperor, and also by that of the Church, as supreme ruler and supreme feudal lord. In this system the Church claimed the princes as her feudal tenants and absorbed the whole system into her hierarchically graded organization.’<sup>1</sup>

Even when the interests of money economy began to reveal themselves more clearly the Church succeeded completely in preserving an aspect of unity in the medieval social structure.

In the fixed order of the hierarchical class-structure, with its apex in God, is contained the explanation of the main economic principle of the Middle Ages, which has been aptly described as the principle of subsistence, i.e. income according to the needs of one's rank. Since man has his fixed place in an order assigned him by God he must not step outside this order. The son follows the profession of his father, and so it goes on through the generations. The medieval man finds his subsistence in his professional occupation and the modern idea of acquisition as a dynamic impulse is for the most part still strange to the man of the Middle Ages. This explains, too, the traditionalist and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 247 f.

analogous non-functional intellectual structure which we have observed in the Middle Ages. The latter have for long been regarded as unrealistic or anti-naturalistic. This is certainly an unfair judgment. The medieval artists, for instance, were able to distinguish very clearly between actual reality and artistic reality. We find as early as the thirteenth century a death-mask of Isabella of France, who died on a crusading voyage in 1271, on her temporary memorial in Cosenza, while her official tombstone, which is still preserved in Saint-Denis, shows the ideal, traditional, conventional queen type and not those transitory features which the Middle Ages regarded as accidental and deceptive.<sup>1</sup> Such examples could be multiplied at will, but we are concerned here only with the structure of medieval thought.

The idea of progress, which may be regarded as dependent on the acquisitive idea in sociological classification, was likewise foreign to the medieval mind. Perhaps we can understand this better to-day than could preceding generations. For the idea of progress in western thought has been severely shaken since the last World War. It is no accident that works such as those of Oswald Spengler and Toynbee, dealing with the morphology of civilization and employing analogies, homologies, etc., have made their mark since that catastrophic event. The medieval conception of history is completely unintelligible from the viewpoint of the idea of progress. From St Augustine and Bede down to Otto von Freising, nephew of the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, we encounter the same idea of the construction of history. It is true that the great epochs of world history may be variously distinguished, but while human history begins with the fall of Adam and concludes as in Christian eschatology, a real progress in history must be impossible. So far as the individual participated in history he was bound by the secure framework of the generations. Man did not force his way beyond birth and death. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, which was one of the most widely read historical works of the Middle Ages, is a classical example of this viewpoint.<sup>2</sup>

Following Dempf, one of the best interpreters of the Middle

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. von Schlosser, *Die Kunst des Mittelalters*, pp. 82 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Everyman ed.

Ages, we give an account of the medieval conception of history as outlined by Otto von Freising. 'The mutability of earthly power is expressly traced to that inherent in mortal wisdom. The general movement of science from east to west testifies to this tendency to decline. Thus the theory of *translatio* contains a very definite idea: it is no longer regarded in a historico-theological manner as in the power of God (*vide* Augustine), but as a tragic demonstration of the weakness inherent in kingdoms. These "translations" are regarded as signs of the decline of kingdoms and are seen as principles of internal division in world history. Thus in seven books are to be described seven declines, and seven transferences of kingdoms: the decline of Babylon and the translation of the kingdom to the Medes; the decline of the Roman Republic with the death of Caesar, and the transition to the Roman Empire; the decline of the heathen Roman Empire under Constantine and the transference of the Christian kingdom to the Greeks; the decline of the western kingdom through the invasion of the Germans and its "translation" to the Franks; the division of the kingdom of Charlemagne; the schism between clergy and monarchy and the promulgation of the ban against the emperor Henry IV; the rising of the Roman people under Arnold of Brescia; and, finally, in an eighth book, the end of both kingdoms (of the Satanic *and* the Christian) and the end of the world.'<sup>1</sup>

The *translatio* conception completely lacks dynamic impulse. History is, as it were, always finished; it will ever be what it already has been, and its fulfilment lies expressly *outside* the realm of history. Let us follow the Catholic historian a little further. What, he asks, is the purpose of this writing of history? 'Nothing else than the application of the scholastic method to history. This method is indeed no more than the testing of given traditions according to their degree of authority, to their credibility, to their effect under contemporary conditions and circumstances; then again the adjustment of selected documents to one another, the examination of contradictory opinions on a definite fact; finally the formulation of a fixed opinion able to hold its ground

<sup>1</sup> *Sacrum Imperium. Geschichts- und Staatsphilosophie des Mittelalters*, Munich 1929, p. 249 f.

against all the others. In this way canonical jurisprudence and western jurisprudence have grown out of the scholastic method. A science of history might have grown up in the twelfth century, if alongside of the great systematic works of the great masters the works of the lesser masters had been placed to test unexplained historical material in detail. But this practical interest in history as a pure historical science simply did not exist, and there is no doubt that when in the modern struggles for reform this practical need arose and exact scientific examination of details was involved, the scholastic method of the Maurists that lay ready to hand was applied to the modern science.<sup>1</sup> We shall return to this topic in a later chapter.

We may now proceed to describe the main features of the scholastic mind, so far as it has its place in a sociological analysis of the Middle Ages and not in the specialized history of philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Scholasticism arose as a science of the schools (as the name itself indicates) and has always retained its character of a school science. In cathedral and conventual schools, and later in the universities, scholasticism developed as the medieval form of science. For teaching purposes, its system had to be given a traditional, receptive, corporate character that could be handed down from generation to generation. The language of scholasticism was Latin, which explains the 'international' character of scholastic writings. From the basic forms of this method of teaching, the *lectio*, or commentary on texts, and the *disputatio*, which involved a discussion of the problems from every aspect, developed the scholastic forms of literature: the *sophismata*, or collections of logical exercises; the *summae*, and finally the *questiones*.

The *summae*, especially the *Summae* of St Thomas Aquinas, are really medieval philosophical systems in which the epoch is seen 'in process of thinking' (Hegel).

The scholastic method of presentation, from the time that Aristotle's *Analytica*, *Topica*, and *Sophistica* became known in the twelfth century, found universal application. The content of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 251 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. especially for this the pioneer work of Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, Freiburg 1909-11.

scholastic thought reflects, in fact, the whole extent of the medieval world and the order of its life, as we have already in part described it. This world is examined in all its aspects as a step to another world. All grades of being, in their immutable subjection to God, are presented in a grand metaphysical and theological ontology, wherein Augustine's subjectivity, Aristotle's metaphysics (which penetrated to the west in the twelfth century), and Neoplatonic metaphysics are all of importance. The relationship of *auctoritas* and *ratio* covers the intellectual span of this philosophy. Ultimately the relationship of scholastic philosophy to mysticism is of paramount importance. While the form of scholasticism is rational and impersonal (as is shown by logic and metaphysics), that of mysticism (more especially in continuance of Augustinian tendencies) is personal (e.g. the solitary converse of the monk with his God), until at last it wrenches itself free with Luther from the arms of that Catholic Church which maintains that it alone holds the key to salvation.

Before we consider—as a touchstone, so to speak, of its understanding of the world—how scholastic philosophy brings concrete economics into its system, we must briefly direct our attention to the new sources of Arabic science and philosophy. The importance of Islam in the building-up of a European social culture is fundamental. The influence of Islam is by no means restricted to the far east; indeed, a deeper analysis shows its profound harmony with the cultural stratification of the west. The character of Islam has a threefold base: firstly in the ancient orient, especially in Semitic prophecy and Jewish religious law, in Persian dualism and eschatology, and in the eastern magical picture of the world and its absolutist bureaucratic State; secondly, in classical antiquity in the form of Hellenism; and lastly, in Christianity in its dogmatic and ceremonial aspect.<sup>1</sup> In addition to those Islamic cultural forms that are related to European culture, there is also a multitude of historical relationships, such as the 'advance of Hellenism; Roman rule over territory that is now Mohammedan; the powerful counter-attack of Iranism, Mithraism, and Christianity which made itself felt even in Ger-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the important book of C. H. Becker, *Islamstudien*, Leipzig 1924, p. 22 f.

mania; the Semitization of the later Roman Empire; the advance of Islam as far as Tours, Rome, and Vienna; the interchange brought about by the Crusades; the importation of chivalric modes of life from east to west; the poetry of the Minnesänger and scholasticism, not to mention the many economic relationships upon a common historical stage.<sup>1</sup> Yet mankind in Europe acquired a different character. Islam took over the existing forms of antiquity to achieve a rational compromise with life which it understood as a system of human relationships. Western man, however, had to *re-discover* antiquity; from the profound loneliness of man he drew his 'Cogito, ergo sum.'

The commentaries of Aristotle became known to scholasticism through the Arab philosophers Avicenna and Averroes, influencing it profoundly. The Aristotelian texts, as well as the most important writings of Plato, especially his *Republic*, became increasingly common from the eleventh century onwards. Added to this was the ever-increasing flow of Arabic scientific discovery, which was absorbed by scholasticism in a by no means purely passive way.

The Church at first offered the strongest resistance to the new study of Aristotle but later cleverly succeeded in assimilating this new intellectual world. Through the researches of Pierre Duhem we know to-day that the schoolmen of the fourteenth century anticipated Galilean mechanics and also the Copernican theory of the world. Nicholas of Oresme, who died in 1382, besides being important as an economist, discovered the principles of the daily movement of the earth and of co-ordinate and analytical geometry, and formulated the law of falling bodies long before Galileo.

A new consciousness of the world appears in this achievement, which we may formulate as follows in the words of Roger Bacon: 'A man is worth more than all the universals in the world. . . . God did not create the world for the benefit of an abstract man, but for the benefit of individual men.' A highly heretical doctrine—written in the thirteenth century! But there were still schoolmen who saw reality in terms of the universals, in general essences.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

The Middle Ages fashioned Greek antiquity, Roman universalism, and Christianity into a unified form of culture for the west. The individual was as yet hidden within the organism of the social structure. His appearance marked the beginning of a new epoch, whose distinguishing features were to be capitalism, dynamic rationalism, progress, and naturalism. When this occurred the universality of the Church was to be shattered and the national State was to take its place.

### 3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TENDENCIES OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

The danger to the medieval unified idea of the world came chiefly from increasing economic activity. Let us see how scholasticism tried to deal with this.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) may undoubtedly be regarded as the classic representative of developed medieval thought. His philosophy is already expressly urban in character. He regards man as by nature a city-dweller; agricultural life seems to him merely a consequence of misfortune and necessity. Bound up with this community life imposed by nature is economic exchange, whose structure he investigates with penetration. The immoderate wealth of some individuals results in the poverty of others—an idea which we are to meet again in Hegel's social theory. St Thomas condemns the immoderate wealth of individuals, but he by no means demands equality of property. His ideal is subsistence based on estates. Division of labour originates chiefly in the differences between individual men, but its true reason must be sought in that Divine Providence which has assigned to peasant, citizen, knight, and monk their respective estates. The State (we shall later deal briefly with the Thomist theory of the State in connection with medieval political theory) is largely governed by the economic motive—in contrast to Aristotelian theory, which stressed the State's moral purposiveness. St Thomas, 'instead of regarding the State, politically and ethically, as an end in itself, places the security of a means of support which is not disturbed by unavoidable contingencies, in

which, as far as possible, all needs are met by the economic unity itself.' <sup>1</sup> Troeltsch draws attention to the urban character of Thomist social ethics. All income and all social differences are to be based on personal labour. 'St Thomas, himself an offshoot of the feudal nobility, ignores feudal tenure and the feudal system; everywhere, however, he assumes a class organization as a matter of course. Only he prefers not to illustrate this from the feudal system. In this matter, too, the otherwise very one-sided orientation of St Thomas towards the city has a general and typical significance in the Catholic social ethic. It is patriarchal within the limits of concessions necessary to unavoidable conditions of natural powers and natural distinctions, but it is in no wise feudal. It is *bourgeois* on the lines of the agrarian-industrial town, with its settled organizations of labour and its clear proportion between labour and income.' <sup>2</sup> Economic gains are acquired, are striven for, not for their own sake, but as subordinate to the physical health and still more to the spiritual and moral conduct of man. Money becomes the measure of these gains by virtue of human laws and serves in the exchange of necessary commodities.

Scholastic thought finds a special difficulty in reconciling itself to trade and trading profits. In this regard, again, St Thomas divagates markedly from Aristotelian theory, for Aristotle regarded trade as unworthy of the free man. In so far as trading profit is the reward of social labours, it appears to St Thomas to be justified. Yet he condemns the striving merely for the sake of profit. He also regards the taking of interest as impermissible, since it means exchanging money for more money, or the acquisition of another's labour, thereby expressly infringing the principles of the law of nature. Money ought only to be lent to relieve necessity and to make it possible for a man to live a life befitting his class. The idea of credit as a function of normal economic activity was not at that time established.

The fulcrum of St Thomas's economic theory is the doctrine of 'the just price.' While distinguishing sharply between value in use and value in exchange he admits that value in exchange cannot be precisely determined: 'Iustum pretium rerum non est

<sup>1</sup> Troeltsch, *ibid.* p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 318-19.



punctualiter determinatum, sed magis in quadam aestimatione consistit; ita quod modica additio vel minutio non videtur tollere aequalitatem iustitiae.’<sup>1</sup> The just price is for Thomas a principle of natural law in so far as the community life of men is derived from their nature. And a community life without the principle of the just price is for Thomas simply unthinkable. ‘Nam ad ius gentium pertinent ea, quae derivantur ex lege naturae sicut conclusiones ex principiis, ut iustae emptiones, venditiones et alia huiusmodi, sine quibus homines ad invicem convivere non possunt; quod est de lege naturae, quia homo est naturaliter animal sociale.’<sup>2</sup>

In a contemporary of St Thomas, Henry of Ghent (1217-93), we find the earliest detailed treatment of ‘rent-purchase,’ a subject we have already touched upon. In certain cases the purchase of rent is regarded as permissible. ‘But Henry takes a further important step; in all cases where a rent of this kind has been permissibly constituted, the owner of it can sell it again for a fixed sum of money: it is then not an exchange of money for money but the acquisition of an incorporeal thing for money, so that in this case there is no offence against the nature of money, which is to serve as a means of exchange. A distinction which crops up again in later scholasticism.’<sup>3</sup> One may be allowed to recall in this connection that in the thirteenth century the Flemish cities of Ghent and Bruges were the meeting-places of medieval international trade, where French, Italian, English, and German merchants came together.

In Duns Scotus (1266-1308)—he was a generation younger than St Thomas and the teacher of William of Ockham—we already find a very modern tinge given to the idea of property, private property being regarded as the instrument without which the individual would acquire goods beyond his needs and without which he would not shrink from a violent struggle resulting inevitably in the victory of the stronger. This expresses an idea which maintained its influence up to the time of Hobbes and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in E. Schreiber’s *Die volkswirtschaftlichen Anschauungen der Scholastik seit Thomas von Aquin*, Jena 1913, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted *ibid.* p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138 f.

Locke. Thus private property is regarded as a result of the law of nature, and consequently Scotus emphasizes for the first time in scholastic social philosophy the *free* agreement between contractors in exchange. He gives to trade an essentially sharper stress than does St Thomas: 'The merchant buys up goods, stores them, and sees to it that they are at the disposal of the purchaser at all times. Thus he provides that goods which are lacking within the State [he writes *respublica*, no longer *civitas*, thus indicating an advance from the peculiarly medieval colouring which characterized St Thomas] are obtained from abroad.'<sup>1</sup> Scotus justifies the importance of the merchant's activities to the State in not limiting himself to a subsistence minimum, whereby he expressly assigns a high income to the merchant: 'Ergo potest iuste ultra sustentationem necessariam pro se et familia sua ad istam necessitatem deputata recipere pretium correspondens industriae suae; et ultra hoc tertio aliquid correspondens periculis suis.'<sup>2</sup> Even though the principle of estate is still preserved by Duns Scotus, theoretical principles are developed in his writings which overthrow the doctrine of the just price and establish the principle of freedom of contract.

As early as in Buridanus (1300-58), a pupil of William of Ockham, the doctrine appears that a morally good man who cared for the common weal and did not strive for possessions 'ultra modum et debitum ordinem,' ought not to be hindered from growing rich, since he brought benefits to the community. Now only the barriers of ecclesiastical universalism needed to be overthrown in order to make way for the era of capitalism.

A brief reference to the change in the medieval way of life, so vividly described for us by Bühler and Huizinga, may serve here to affirm that secularization which we have just noted in the sphere of economic theory. In the thirteenth century the author of *Aucassin et Nicolette* wrote: 'Into Paradise . . . go those aged priests, and those old cripples, and the maimed, who all day long and all night cough before the altars . . . with them have I nought to do. But in Hell will I go. For to Hell go the fair clerks and the fair knights . . . there go the fair and courteous ladies, who have friends, two or three, together with their

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted *ibid.* p. 154.

wedded lords. And there pass the gold and the silver, the ermine and all rich furs, harpers and minstrels, and the happy of the world.' <sup>1</sup> It is a world that has at last become earthly.

#### 4. THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The understanding of medieval political philosophy can now give us no further difficulties. The saying in the Gospel that 'regnum meum non est de hoc mundo' had somehow to be harmonized with the complex reality of the Roman Empire as early as the time of the Fathers. But the Augustinian solution, while it continued to influence medieval thought, could not remove the tension between the secular State and ecclesiastical pretensions to political leadership. The thinkers of the ninth century were still faced with the difficulty of discovering the frontiers of secular and ecclesiastical authority—of rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. The functions of the two authorities could be separated with relative ease, but to go beyond functional limitations to a clear, juristic formulation seemed impossible. The political thought of the Middle Ages did not reach maturity until the appearance of the *Decretum Gratiani* about 1150. The ideas of Gratian derive chiefly from the lawyers who made the Justinian Code, and from the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville. The natural law of late antiquity had already ere this been identified with the law of God, so that the *Decretum* could declare that: 'Ius naturae est quod in lege et evangelio continetur.' In the twelfth century the divine origin of the law of nature was brought afresh to the consciousness of man.

Divine law, that is to say the law of nature, is the common source of both ecclesiastical and secular law. The *ius gentium*, however, is only something inferred from the law of nature. As divine law it is immutable, and all human laws which are derived from it are applied either to secular or ecclesiastical ends. Spiritual laws, however, are above the secular in so far as they treat of spiritual things, and their interpretation belongs to the Church alone. The Church, as keeper of the spiritual keys, cannot err,

<sup>1</sup> *Aucassin and Nicolette*, Everyman ed., p. 6.

whilst the princes can. Yet canon law must not be identified with divine law. *Ius gentium* and *ius civile*, in so far as the latter does not contradict the law of nature, are as binding on man as canon law, since all three kinds of law have their source in the law of nature.

It would be useful to describe in more detail the sociological connection of Roman and canon law, but this would go beyond the limits of our inquiry. The effect of the former on the growth of the State and of secular law in the Middle Ages was very profound. In Italy and southern France the tradition of Roman law had always continued in essentials. The struggles between empire and papacy played some part in a renewal of Roman political and public law, and with the increasing importance of the cities there was an increasing tendency to go back to Roman civil law, in which highly developed legal forms capable of regulating the complicated tangle of city life were ready to hand. Roman law was taught systematically in the twelfth century at the university of Bologna, spreading thence throughout the west, and increasingly promoting the establishment of medieval universalism, which without it could never have become a principle of organization either in the Middle Ages or in modern times.<sup>1</sup> As for canon law, its influence on the west needs no demonstration—its upholder was the powerful organization of the Church. However different in degree might be the influence of Roman law in Italy, France, Germany, and England, no country—not even England—could escape the influence of Roman law; unfortunately we are still very insufficiently informed on relevant sociological differences in the development of the various national systems of law.

The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas laid down the political and social philosophy of the Middle Ages in its classic form. We give here an account of its main features, based upon St Thomas's original texts, and on the *De Regimine Principum* in particular.<sup>2</sup> Man has an aim to which his life and activity is directed, for he is a being who acts through his intellect. Man has been endowed by nature with the light of the intellect, by

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Meynial, in *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*, Oxford 1932, pp. 363 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, Paris 1871, *Summa Theologiae*, vols. i-vi; *De Regimine Principum*, vol. xxvii.

which his conduct shall be guided so as to achieve his aim. If man lived only for himself in isolation, as many animals do, then he would need no other guidance. Each individual man, in so far as he guided his conduct by the God-given light of the intellect, would have been a king unto himself, under the King of kings. But it is a requirement of nature that man should be a social creature, living in a State. Within the community each man supports the other, for different men, through their intellects, engage in the investigation of very different matters: one devotes himself to medicine, another to something else, and so on. The social nature of man is most clearly indicated by the fact that he alone has the power of speech, the capability of communicating his thoughts to others. If in this way it is natural for a man to live in community with many men, then there must also be amongst men something whereby they may be controlled.

With men in such numbers and with the struggle of the individual to further his private interests in a selfish manner human society would break up if there were no one to whom was entrusted the care for the common welfare; even as the body of man, or of any living being, would disintegrate if there were no common guiding force in the body to attend to the general good of all its members. This has a deep intellectual foundation. The individual, the ego, and the general are not one and the same. In the ego lies the distinguishing and separating element, in the general the uniting and binding.

But that which is the distinct and the different has also a variety of causes. There must therefore also be, besides that which actuates each for his own benefit, something else which is directed to the general good of the many. Therefore wherever multiplicity is organized into unity, we find a guiding principle: there must be a ruling principle in every multiplicity.

After this anthropological argument for the political power of the State, which we have taken from St Thomas's treatise *De Regimine Principum*,<sup>1</sup> he proceeds to a theological argument. The

<sup>1</sup> The *De Regimine Principum* has recently been recognized as being only partly written by St Thomas Aquinas, yet it is still the classical text-book of medieval political theory in the later history of political ideas; cf. Lane-Poole, *Illustrations of Medieval Thought and Learning*, London 1920.

secular power, like the spiritual, is ordained by God. The two are therefore completely compatible. God is the creator of human nature, and since State and society are made necessary by nature, God is also the author and source of political power. According to Thomist doctrine, even without the Fall there would have had to be dominion over the free—a *dominium politicum*.

The best form of government in the view of St Thomas is monarchy, chiefly for the reason that the guidance of a multiplicity by a single holder of authority best ensures the benefit of peace. The bees have a single queen, and in the universe as a whole *one* God is Creator and Lord of all. Tyranny may be prevented by reserving a share of the government for the aristocratic and democratic elements. The reward of the good king is the highest degree of heavenly beatitude. The aim of the State is to guide its citizens to a happy and virtuous life. If mere life as such were the aim of the political community, then animals and slaves—one sees clearly that Aristotle's idea of the slave as being outside the body politic is still prevalent in this—would also be parts of the State. The preservation of peace is held by St Thomas, following St Augustine, to be the chief task of political life. The next important task of the political community, in order to realize a happy and virtuous life for its citizens, is to ensure a certain level of material wealth. But we have already discussed the main features of the Thomist economic system. The last and highest aim of the State, however, is the attainment of the eternal possession of God. The natural power of man is in need of the divine governance which alone can lead men to this goal. The possessor of this divine power is Jesus Christ, whom the Gospel calls not merely priest, but king. Therefore it is a *royal* priesthood that derives from Him, and the authority of this priesthood is vested in the Vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome. To him the kings of the Christian peoples must be subject, as to Jesus Christ Himself. Thus St Thomas teaches the subordination of the lay to the spiritual power. But since this subordination is argued from the point of view of aims to be attained, St Thomas does not become, like Augustino Trionfo, a supporter of the *potestas directa*. Rather he teaches in accordance

with the compromisory character of his system—the *potestas indirecta* of the Church in temporal things, whereby the Church enjoys power over the secular world only in so far as matters supernatural are concerned.

As against the universal claim of the papacy which we have encountered in Gregory VII and which Innocent III brought to its culmination, St Thomas therefore adopts a middle position, in which the unifying thought of the Middle Ages exhibits its real conciliatory strength.

We have already mentioned those forces which threatened to disrupt the organic structure of the medieval social body. Not the least of these was the growing national form of State with its dynamic worldly rationalism, which was developed by Frederick II in South Italy with supreme effectiveness. When the scholasticism of the later Middle Ages undertook the justification of the secular State as against the universal claim of the Church, the period of the decline of the Middle Ages had set in.

In Dante's *De Monarchia* we find, by comparison with St Augustine, a completely changed idea of the *civitas impiorum*. The Romans, in the opinion of Dante, are the Chosen People, destined to carry the eagles of the secular empire to victory. His object is to show the *difference* between the papal and imperial powers and to prove that it was their amalgamation which had brought the Church into danger of perishing:

Forth from His plastic hand, who charm'd beholds  
Her image ere she yet exist, the soul  
Comes like a babe, that wantons sportively,  
Weeping and laughing in its wayward moods;  
As artless, and as ignorant of aught,  
Save that her Maker being one who dwells  
With gladness ever, willingly she turns  
To whate'er yields her joy. Of some slight good  
The flavour soon she tastes; and, snared by that,  
With fondness she pursues it; if no guide  
Recal, no rein direct her wandering course.  
Hence it behoved, the law should be a curb; . . .

. . . Thus the cause  
Is not corrupted nature in yourselves,  
But ill-conducting, that hath turn'd the world  
To evil. Rome, that turn'd it unto good,  
Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams  
Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.

One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword  
Is grafted on the crook; and, so conjoin'd,  
Each must perforce decline to worse, unawed  
By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark  
The blade; . . .

. . . The Church of Rome,  
Mixing two governments that ill assort,  
Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,  
And there herself and burden much defiled.<sup>1</sup>

To ensure a happy life for man in this world is the task of lay sovereignty: the happiness of the heavenly life, however, can be vouchsafed him only by the Church. But even the emperor, as Dante shows in the third book of the *De Monarchia*, enjoys his power by virtue of Divine Grace, and he is enjoined to honour the Pope even as the eldest-born son honours his father. For God alone is supreme Ruler over all things—spiritual and temporal alike.

The imperial authority is explicitly regarded by Dante as a super-national power whose task it is to maintain peace and justice in the world. The ecclesiastical idea of world empire is therefore emphatically stressed by Dante as being secular. Carlyle has clearly perceived the persistent influence of Dante's treatise *De Monarchia* in his classic history of medieval political theory: 'It seems clear to us that the general trend of medieval society was towards the disintegration of political unity in the west and the development of the independent political societies of modern Europe; but the conception of a larger political unity was not wholly lost, and we in the modern world are only taking up again the necessary task of civilization.'<sup>2</sup>

Of vital significance in late medieval thought, when the change to the modern world was taking place—a change which we have already described in the sphere of economic practice and theory—are the writings of Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham. Both were supporters of Lewis of Bavaria and lived at the same time at his court in Munich. Marsilius, who wrote the *Defensor Pacis*, was the emperor's physician. Ockham's influence on Marsilius has recently been proved to be less than was once

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Everyman ed., *Purgatory*, canto xvi, pp. 214-16.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, London 1936, vol. vi, p. 127.



thought, since it has been possible to show that Marsilius's political doctrines were known before the publication of Ockham's political works. But it is certain that they both taught simultaneously in Paris, and that the general content of their writings can be reduced to central ideas common to both. Both thinkers were undoubtedly strongly influenced by Duns Scotus's voluntarism, in which the political will to power of the later Middle Ages found a philosophical instrument. Above all, however, they were affected by Roger Bacon's demand for a new *scientia experimentalis*, which was to lead the qualitative nature-philosophy of the Middle Ages into the path of modern quantitative thought. If to these forces we add Ockham's theory of knowledge, then the realistic tendency of the political theory of this thinker at once becomes comprehensible.

Ockham's critical theory of knowledge gave the medieval doctrine of universals its death-blow. The philosopher must begin with the individual. Only the individual is real; only the universal requires explanation. Universals are not real, they are only *in mente*. If concepts pass beyond the world of experience they lose all certainty. Concepts such as God, the soul, and so on, are to him as much 'unknowns' as  $x$  and  $y$ ; with Ockham metaphysics becomes logic. Yet Ockham does not degenerate into a superficial materialist empiricist: he believes that concepts, once conceived, possess eternal validity and truth.

We have touched upon Ockham's theory of knowledge because it is closely bound up with his political theory (as we shall shortly see), and if Ockham's ideas reappear in Hobbes and Locke, through the agency of Hooker, then it is merely because the nominalism, or as we would say the realism, of Ockham has sociologically related suppositions in his theory of knowledge and of politics. A thinker, if he really deserves the name, has not got a fortuitous theory of knowledge and an equally fortuitous philosophy of politics; it is rather a unified attitude to the world which determines his understanding of it. Only a misleading method of writing the history of philosophy has failed to read the social ideas of a thinker into the premises of his theory of knowledge. But it is precisely this that Ockham, and later thinkers who have profound affinity with him, can teach us to do.

Ockham's political doctrine starts with the belief that in a state of nature men lived according to the law of nature and the law of God. The law of nature coincides with the natural intellect, though this is but a picture of the *ideal* state. Divine law has been revealed in the Bible. In a state of nature all men were free, and all property was common. So much for the theological assumptions of Ockham's political theory. But man fell from this state of innocence and thus it became necessary to found the State for the common good of men. This was effected by a general contract of human society—*generale pactum societatis humanae*. A prince was elected and members of the community undertook to obey him in so far as his ordinances concerned the common good. As much freedom was left to the individual as was compatible with the common good. Thus he was sure of his life and of the freedom of his person. With the founding of the State it became necessary to draw up human or civic laws. By these the *right of property* was established. In this way the security of property and of law was guaranteed—an anticipation of Locke's idea of the State which we shall have to examine later.

All men have the right to participate in the making of laws since it is a matter which touches all—*quod omnes tangit, debet tractari per omnes*. But they can delegate this right to certain persons, as, for example, to princes. In so doing, however, they surrender to him only such rights as they themselves have. The prince may not exceed these rights and may only do such things as are not contrary to divine or natural law, otherwise the right of resistance by those who have surrendered their rights comes into force. Next in importance is Ockham's observation that the State and its laws do not depend upon religion, and that the priest must therefore protect the unbelievers equally with the faithful. A peculiar motive of tolerance seems to be present here. Ockham holds monarchy to be the best form of State—in harmony with the Thomist tradition—since it best ensures the peace of the world. Following Dante, he gave to his monarchy a world-empire character, even though he saw that this world empire was not to be found in actual fact.

Marsilius of Padua's treatise, *Defensor Pacis*, appeared in 1324 and was written in collaboration with John of Jandun. Marsilius

teaches that the only legislator in the State is the people as a whole, that is to say the majority; but he still speaks of majority, a fact which is frequently overlooked, from the point of view of each estate: *valentiorē inquam partē considerata quantitate personarum et qualitate*.<sup>1</sup> Marsilius clearly distinguishes between the legislative and the executive; although the latter is dependent on the legislative it is yet distinct. <sup>2</sup> This expresses another idea of subsequent liberalist political theory in a most original way.

The sharp attack of both thinkers on papal universalism is doubtless to be explained by the tendency to social criticism in the Franciscan movement. Marsilius does not regard the priesthood as essential to the existence of the State. This extremely revolutionary idea, which anticipates Hus and Wycliffe, becomes comprehensible when one sees how he groups laymen and priests in a unified body of believers. Christ's judgment is to be expected only in the next world. Marsilius rejects papal supremacy in a roundabout way. Thus he recognizes only the Church as a whole as the sole deciding organ of the Church, acting through a general synod of spiritual *and* lay representatives. The State alone can summon this synod, for it alone can create and maintain justice. This general Church council decides on all spiritual questions, even on the excommunication of princes and the launching of interdicts. It becomes the voice of the Universal Church. The Pope is no more to rule the emperor than the Archbishop of Rheims is to rule the King of France.

Although Marsilius and Ockham still aim at imperial unity, the pluralism of national states was a reality before their eyes which they were bound to acknowledge.

To all the thinkers whom we have here described, even to the most radical of them, it was a common and a natural assumption that the law of nature was the law of God. The idea of the law of nature became a crystallizing point of the late classical and Christian heritage never to be lost in subsequent centuries. Even in Marxian Socialism's formulation of ideas of freedom and equality this western heritage, if we do not err, continues its influence. Professor Laski has expressively summarized this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Marsiglio of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, ed. C. W. Previté-Orton, Cambridge 1929.

idea in the political philosophy of the Middle Ages: '... it is important to remember that the true medieval doctrine never dies. Not merely to the end of the Middle Ages does the notion persist that the State is built upon the idea of law. . . . Natural law, for the Middle Ages, has the primary force of modern enacted legislation. . . . Medieval politics, in fact, are a philosophy of universal right; and that, in its turn, is a theory of ethics, which is the part of theology. Men, accordingly, may not transgress it, since they dare not transgress the will of God. . . . The idea is a vital one; for it is at once the cause and the demonstration of the continuity of political thought in the western world. The contribution of Greek Stoicism to Roman law and to Christianity, that twofold sanction gives it new vigour and authority for over a thousand years. In the sixteenth century it encountered the antithetic notion of *raison d'État*; and the form given to it in the Hobbesian philosophy started a counter-tradition from which it has never fully recovered. Yet, even in the age of its decline, its roots are deep in human experience. International law traces its origin to its influence; men like Alberico Gentili, Grotius, and the great Jesuits wrote confessedly in its terms. . . . Freed from its ecclesiastical environment, it becomes, in the doctrine of the Rights of Man, one of the creative forces in modern time. And even when Benthamite dogmatism on the one hand, and Hegelian subtlety on the other, had made the rights of man an unacceptable conception, the thesis of a State to be judged by the purposes it achieves bore testimony to the power it embodies. There is a sense, in fact, in which the basic idea of natural law is a necessary part of any political philosophy which seeks to be more than a doctrine of immediate expediency. It was the glory of the medieval thinkers not only to have grasped that truth, but so to have stated it as to make it an integral part of the heritage of mankind.'<sup>1</sup>

We have thus travelled through the unified world of medieval civilization up to the onset of its dissolution. If we desire to conjure up its peculiar transcendence, we have only to enter a Gothic cathedral in which art, as a single complex of music,

<sup>1</sup> *Political Theory in the Later Middle Ages, Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. viii, p. 644 f.

liturgy, architecture, spatial values, painting, and sculpture, has handed its spirit down to us for all time. The towers rise up, in ever-increasing delicacy of masonry and sculpture, pointing to a world beyond, yet they are firmly founded upon this earth. The mighty spaces, ingeniously vaulted, witnesses to a new mathematical knowledge, seem unearthly, seem to rise beyond the bounds of the real. How small and cramped are the houses of the citizens, how far God's house outsoars them! The spaciousness of the cathedral is the very expression of medieval life—peasant, citizen, knight, emperor and bishop, doctrine, legend, history, heaven, and hell are shaped by it. Even the remotest vaultings of the roof are still animated by the formative will of the Christian artist, for there the figure of an angel prays and gazes with open eyes into far distances.

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## CHAPTER IV

### RENAISSANCE

#### *Man—World—State*

#### I. NOVA VITA

THE history of civilization shows us only flux and transition, and each impression of it depends on the standpoint of the observer. Divisions into periods are merely expedients which can always be disputed and which, in fact, have been disputed.

The epoch which, in our attempt to trace the decisive and still operative political and social foundations of the western world, we term the Renaissance, stretches roughly from the beginning of the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century. 'Renaissance' is not used here in the narrower sense of a revival of antiquity. We understand by Renaissance rather that march of a new spirit which finally shattered the medieval order, laid the foundations of a new western outlook, and eventually issued in the new world of the seventeenth century—that world which, in essentials, put an end to the Middle Ages once and for all.

We are thus concerned with the Renaissance as the 'rebirth' of western man in the sense of the words of St Paul: 'And be renewed in the spirit of your mind,'<sup>1</sup> or: 'We also should walk in newness of life.'<sup>2</sup> This religious motivation is of primary importance for an understanding of the Renaissance period. It was, indeed, as we shall soon see, not the only driving force; but only by recognizing the part it played is it at all possible to comprehend Humanism, Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation as one whole. It is not in Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* that we encounter the word *renaissance* for the first time. The great religious revivalists of the thirteenth century, St Francis of Assisi and Joachim of Fiore, used the terms *renovatio*,

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians iv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Romans vi. 4.

*nova vita, renasci, regenerari* in their writings. Their pupils and followers, the so-called Spirituals, who exerted a most profound influence on Dante, employed the same terms as battle-cries against the movement they had themselves occasioned, against 'reaction against theological scholarship, ecclesiastical power and domination, hierarchical display, dogma, and mere words; and as an expression of the new piety for which they called of the unwritten, eternal Gospel (*evangelium aeternum*) in the coming Age of the Spirit and of brotherly love to be manifested in childlike happiness.'<sup>1</sup> To these stirrings were added the invigorating effect of the works of St Augustine and of Plotinus, and of the new message of German, Dutch, and Italian mysticism. The influence of these currents extended far beyond ecclesiastical circles. The watchword of purification of the Church became a vehicle for the desire for the improvement and elevation of secular life also, in political and social matters, as well as in poetry and art.

It is true that the medieval scholastic world of ideas was relinquished, but slowly, and through bitter struggles. In Dante's case the universalist tendencies of medieval thought certainly still predominated, although his great work was conducive to the emergence of an Italian national language. Petrarch became an enthusiastic follower of Cola di Rienzi whose political goal was the creation of a united Italy. Although Rienzi failed in practice his contemporaries were well aware of the epoch-making significance of his influence. Even Machiavelli wrote more than a hundred years later in his *Florentine History*: 'About this time [1347] a memorable incident happened in Rome. A certain Niccolò di Lorenzo, a notary in the Capitol, drove out the senators, and with the title of Tribune, made himself head of the Roman Republic, restoring its ancient institutions [*nell' antica forma ridusse*] and governing it with so great a name for justice and conduct, that not neighbouring towns only, but the whole of Italy sent him envoys. Whereupon the ancient provinces of the Empire [the other European countries—the revival of the idea of the Roman World Empire is evident here], seeing Rome thus brought back, as it were, to life [*vedendo come Roma*

<sup>1</sup> K. Burdach, *Reformation, Renaissance, Humanismus*, Berlin 1926, p. 34.



*era rinata*] were thrown into a ferment and moved, some by fear and some by hope, hastened to do her honour.'<sup>1</sup> The great Florentine adopted the political objective of a united Italy from Rienzi.

The aim of a national State appeared in the works of the anti-papists, Marsiglio of Padua and William of Ockham. The struggles between the papal power and the ever-growing European empires, such as those of England, France, and Germany, were destined to continue from the beginning of the fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century. England led the way. From 1307 onward the nobility and the middle class had united in energetic resistance to the papal exploitation of the country. John Wycliffe, the translator of the English Bible, attacked the Pope as antichrist, and levelled devastating criticism at the worldliness of the Church. In 1366 Urban V was denied the annual tribute, the jurisdiction of the clergy was appreciably curtailed, and all appeals to the Curia were forbidden. Ecclesiastical dues and the appointment of bishops were made subject to the approval of the king. It is important to note that England succeeded in securing a national Church independent of the Pope more than a century *before* the actual 'Reformation movement.' Wycliffe's ideas were later disseminated in Bohemia by his pupil Hus (furthermore, close family connections existed between the Bohemian crown and the English monarchy at this period), and although the Council of Constance sentenced Hus to be burnt at the stake his criticism of the Church of the Pope of Rome survived to influence the Reformation movements of the sixteenth century.

In France also by the end of the fourteenth century (1398) the way was already paved for Gallicanism, although Avignon had been the seat of the papacy since 1309. Only in Germany had the development of territorial states proceeded in the meantime so far that the formation of a national Catholic Church was impossible. This fact explains to a great extent the disintegrating effects of the Lutheran Reformation, which have governed the form and the history of the German State up to the present day. In his work, *De Concordantia catholica*, which Nicholas of Cusa

<sup>1</sup> *Florentine History*, trans. N. H. Thomson, London 1906, bk. i, p. 63.

submitted to the Council of Basle as a proposal for reform, an imposing attempt is once more made to reconcile the German Empire with the universalist claim of the papal Church. But the Council disregarded the bold ideas of the pious philosopher. The depth of Cusanus's concern for Germany, however, is shown by the stipulation in his will that his heart should find its last resting-place in his home village of Cues.

It is true that the Roman Church succeeded in raising itself once more out of the slough in schism and in the Conciliar period. The humanist Aeneas Silvius, when he had been elected Pope as Pius II, rejected as heresy the appeal of the Pope to a council; and the Spaniard Torquemada, in his *Summa*, written about this time, reverted to the Thomist doctrine of the *poteslas indiretta* of the Pope, whereby the absolute rule of the Pope over Church and councils seemed to be re-established. Scarcely seventy years later, however, through the action of Luther, the conflict broke out afresh, and the Roman Church was able to meet it only by a 'root and branch' reformation. As a result of the Church's alliance in the sixteenth century with the militant Order of Jesus, Catholicism gained new strength and achieved renewed power.

## 2. THE DISCOVERY OF PERSONALITY

Escape from the universalist scheme of the ecclesiastical world was a slow process. Jacob Burckhardt, in his imperishable work on *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, has declared the discovery of personality to be the real achievement of this age: 'In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation—only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air; an *objective* treatment and consideration of the State and of all the things of this world became possible. The *subjective* side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spiritual *individual*

[observe the expressions *uomo singolare* and *uomo unico* for the higher and highest stages of individual development], and recognized himself as such.<sup>1</sup> Our next task is to endeavour to trace this progressive process of the recognition of the individual as such.

With this in view we shall be guided by three documents taken from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Petrarch describes in his *Letters* the ascent of Mont Ventoux in the year 1336: 'To-day I have made the ascent of the highest mountain in this region, which is not improperly called the Ventosum [i.e. windy]. My only motive was the wish to see what so great an elevation had to offer. I have had the expedition in mind for many years; for, as you know, I have lived in this region from infancy, having been cast here by that fate which determines the affairs of men. Consequently the mountain, which is visible from a great distance, was ever before my eyes, and I conceived the plan of some time doing what I have at last accomplished to-day. The idea took hold of me with especial force when, in re-reading Livy's *History of Rome* yesterday, I happened upon the place where Philip of Macedon, the same who waged war against the Romans, ascended Mount Haemus in Thessaly, from whose summit he was able, it is said, to see two seas, the Adriatic and the Euxine. Whether this be true or false I have not been able to determine, for the mountain is too far away, and writers disagree. Pomponius Mela, the cosmographer . . . admits its truth without hesitation; Titus Livius, on the other hand, considers it false. I, assuredly, should not have left the question long in doubt had that mountain been as easy to explore as this one. . . . I came to look about for a companion and my brother was delighted to come. . . . At the time fixed we left the house, and by evening reached Malaucène, which lies at the foot of the mountain, to the north. Having rested there a day, we finally made the ascent this morning, with no companions except two servants; and a most difficult task it was. The mountain is a very steep and almost inaccessible mass of stony soil. But as the poet has well said, "Remorseless toil conquers all." It was a long day, the air fine. We enjoyed the advantages of vigour of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, London 1929, p. 143.

mind and strength and agility of body. . . . We found an old shepherd in one of the mountain dales, who tried, at great length, to dissuade us from the ascent, saying that some fifty years before he had, in the same ardour of youth, reached the summit, but had gotten for his pains nothing except fatigue and regret, and clothes and body torn by the rocks and briers. No one, so far as he or his companions knew, had ever tried the ascent before or after him. . . .’ And here the poet described the impression made on him by the view from the summit of the mountain: ‘At first, owing to the unaccustomed quality of the air and the effect of the great sweep of view spread out before me, I stood like one dazed. I beheld the clouds under our feet, and what I had read of Athos and Olympus seemed less incredible (as I myself witnessed the same things from a mountain of less fame). . . . The Alps, rugged and snow-capped, seemed to rise close by, although they were really at a great distance; the very same Alps through which that fierce enemy of the Roman name once made his way, bursting the rocks, if we may believe the report, by the application of vinegar. I sighed, I must confess, for the skies of Italy, which I beheld rather with my mind than with my eyes. An inexpressible longing came over me to see once more my friend and my country. . . . I gazed toward the west. I was unable to discern the summits of the Pyrenees, which form the barrier between France and Spain; not because of any intervening obstacle that I know of but owing simply to the insufficiency of our mortal vision. But I could see with the utmost clearness, off to the right, the mountains of the region about Lyons, and to the left the bay of Marseilles and the waters that lash the shores of Aigues-Mortes. . . . Under our very eyes flowed the Rhône. While I was thus dividing my thoughts, now turning my attention to some terrestrial object that lay before me, now raising my soul, as I had done my body, to higher planes, it occurred to me to look into my copy of St Augustine’s *Confessions*, a gift that I owe to your love, and that I always have about me. [The letter is addressed to a Florentine Augustinian friar who had presented St Augustine’s *Confessions* to Petrarch in 1333 in Paris.] I opened it . . . and it chanced that the tenth book presented itself . . . : “And men go about to wonder at the

heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but themselves they consider not." I was abashed, and, asking my brother (who was anxious to hear more) not to annoy me, I closed the book, angry with myself that I should still be admiring earthly things who might long ago have learned from even the pagan philosophers that nothing is wonderful but the soul, which, when great itself, finds nothing great outside itself. Then, in truth, I was satisfied that I had seen enough of the mountain; I turned my inward eye upon myself, and from that time not a syllable fell from my lips until we reached the bottom again.<sup>1</sup> What a moving document is this letter of Petrarch's from the earlier half of the fourteenth century! The new experience of nature was still within the confines of the humanist interest of the man, yet the view from the summit of the mountain overwhelmed him: with deep yearning his gaze turned in the direction of his native country, Italy. The national feeling of modern man proclaimed its birth. But man was not yet free and self-reliant. Petrarch took out Augustine's *Confessions*, which he always carried with him, and reflected on the passage in Book X, which we have already quoted in Chapter II. 'The world, O man,' so the Father of the Church admonishes him, 'is for the time in you, in the divine image in your soul; take care not to lose yourself in the external material world which is ever threatening you.' Petrarch became contemplative: the veil of the medieval idea of the world still covered his eyes.

Now let us take the next document. It is to be found in the discourse *De Hominis Dignitate* composed by Pico della Mirandola, one of the most outstanding members of the Platonic Academy, in the second half of the fifteenth century. Burckhardt has characterized this discourse as one of the noblest legacies of the age of the Renaissance. 'When God had created all things, as *Moses* and *Timaeus* bear witness, He finally thought of fashioning man. But He had no form left for a new creature, and no

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Petrarch, a Selection from his Correspondence designed to illustrate the Beginnings of the Renaissance*, translated from the Latin by J. H. Robinson, London 1914, pp. 307 ff.

substance with which to endow the new child, nor any space which it, as beholder of the universe, could occupy. The universe had already been filled and everything divided into orders of height, middle, and depth. But God would not be the Supreme Father had He lacked power in the case of His latest creature, He would not be Eternal Wisdom had He, through perplexity, faltered in the case of something that had to be created, and He would not be Merciful Love if the creature that was to extol the Divine Goodness before others were to be without it itself. And thus the Supreme Master resolved that the creature to whom He could give nothing peculiarly its own should share in everything that had been given severally to the other creatures. Thus He brought man into the world as a creature of uncertain form, placed him in the midst of it, and said to him: I have given thee, Adam, no fixed abode, no form of thine own, no special function, so that thou mayest choose thyself, abode, form, and function, and that which thou shalt choose shall be thine. I have endowed all other creatures with a definite nature and thereby confined them within fixed limits. Thou art not hemmed in by any limits; thou shalt create them for thyself according to thy will, under the direction of which I have placed thee. I have placed thee in the midst of the world so that thou mayest from there easily look around on all that has been created. I have made thee neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal, so that thou, as thine own shaper and creator, mayest mould thyself as thou wilt. Thou canst degenerate to an irrational brute and raise thy species to heavenly beings, all according as thou wishest. What a favour of God the Father is this, what bliss for man! It is given him to have what he desires and to be that which he wills.' In Pico's view man is free and placed in a boundless world. He had a plastic conception of the world. In his work *In Astrologiam* Pico expressly attacks the astrological notions to which his notable contemporary, Ficino, still adhered. For him there remained only the real effects of the sky, the forces of light and heat. The astrological creed limits human freedom, the original creative power of man. It is this and not the force of the stars that we recognize and revere in the work of great thinkers, statesmen, and artists.

Later, when founding the new scientific cosmology, Leonardo, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton were to follow the *vera causa* as it had been already expressed in *In Astrologiam*. True, an allegorical commentary on the Mosaic story of creation began Pico's literary activities, and at the close of his brilliant career he became the friend of the founder and leader of the Florentine religious tyranny, of Girolamo Savonarola, who once again, for a short time, hung the veil of medievalism over the Renaissance longing for experience and love of beauty.

Our third document is taken from Montaigne's *Essays*, which first appeared in 1580. Here the individual in the modern sense is finally discovered; even as Vesalius described the anatomy of the human body, only a few years earlier, in his *Corporis Humani Fabrica*, so Montaigne revealed the anatomy of the human soul. Let us hear how he justifies and introduces his attempt: 'Or, comme dict Plin, chascun est à soy mesme une très bonne discipline, pourveu qu'il ayt la suffisance de s'espier de prez. Ce n'est pas icy ma doctrine, c'est mon estude; et n'est pas la leçon d'aultruy, c'est la mienne: et ne me doit on pourtant sçavoir mauvais gré si je la communique; ce qui me sert peult aussi, par accident, servir à un aultre. Au demourant, je ne gaste rien, je n'use que du mien; et si je foys le fol, c'est à mes despens, et sans l'interest de personne! car c'est en folie qui meurt en moy, qui n'a point de suite. Nous n'avons nouvelles que de deux ou trois anciens qui ayent battu ce chemin; et si ne pouvons dire si c'est du tout en pareille manière à cette cy, n'en cognoissant que les noms. Nul depuis ne s'est jecté sur leur trace. C'est une espineuse entreprinse, et plus qu'il ne semble, de suyvre une allure si vagabonde que celle de nostre esprit, de penetrer les profondeurs opaques de ses replis internes, de choisir et arrester tant de menus airs de ses agitations; et est un amusement nouveau et extraordinaire qui nous retire des occupations communes du monde, ouy, et des plus recommandees. Il y a plusieurs annees que je n'ay que moy pour visee à mes pensees, que je ne contre-roulle et n'estudie que moy; et si j'estudie aultre chose, c'est pour soubdain le coucher sur moy, ou en moy, pour mieulx dire; et ne me semble point faillir, si, comme il se fait des aultres sciences sans comparaison moins utiles, je foys part de ce que j'ay appris

en cette cy, quoyque je ne me contente gueres du progrez que j'y ay faict. Il n'est description pareille en difficulté à la description de soy mesme, ny certes en utilité: encores se fault il testonner, encores se fault il ordonner et renger, pour sortir en place: or, je me pare sans cesse, car je me descriis sans cesse. . . .<sup>1</sup> The lord of the castle of Périgord was certainly still a Catholic, but only in the sense of *fides implicita*. Articles of faith and dogmas no longer stood at the centre of daily life. Montaigne commended himself to Divine Providence and said of his writings that he would be willing to submit them openly to the decisions of the Catholic Apostolic Church, the Church 'in which I was born and in which I shall die.' But this attitude was rather a reflection of Montaigne's fundamental social conservatism, which rejected the Huguenot Reformation in so far as it excluded worldly pagan elements. Traditional law was for him the pillar of the life of the State. The new preoccupation with this world, arising from his basic anthropological postulates, is perhaps to be seen nowhere more clearly than in his attitude to the phenomenon of death: 'La mort se mesle et confond par tout à nostre vie.' Death is interwoven with all our life. 'Qui apprendroit les hommes à mourir, leur apprendroit à vivre.' He who teaches men how to die, teaches them how to live. Death is thus incorporated in life and no longer transcends it. It becomes the true touchstone of human freedom. 'Qui a apprins à mourir, il a desapprins à servir . . . le savoir mourir nous affranchit de toute subiection et contraincte.' This man certainly no longer needed the solace of that Church which claimed monopoly of all means of grace. He holds his life firmly in his own hands. 'It is given to him to have what he desires and to be that which he wills.' Pico had already taught us this. The epoch of the Middle Ages was at an end, the veil was torn down.

The new type of man discovered by the Renaissance lived in a new world. We must now turn our attention to this new world, and observe how all the features of the science and philosophy of the period are consistent with the character of this new man, in whom the consciousness of the world and of nature are scarcely distinguished from one another.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Essais*, vol. ii, p. 192 f., Jean Gillequin, Paris.



## 3. THE NEW CONCEPTION OF NATURE

In Petrarch we still discovered a strong inhibition against yielding entirely to his deep feeling for nature. The old medieval order of things was still too near him. The love mysticism of the Franciscans began to break down the partition between nature and spirit, in that its principle of love permeated the whole of existence. Fishes and birds, trees and flowers, wind and water, sun and moon became brothers and sisters of man. In early Renaissance paintings we are confronted with the charming intimacy and primitiveness of this new conception of nature, tinged by the influence of the Franciscan movement. One has but to think of Giotto and Cimabue. But the imagery and symbolism of mystical sermons could no longer satisfy fifteenth- and sixteenth-century man. Accordingly Telesio urged that nature was not to be comprehended through the apparatus of the Aristotelian categories, and that it had to be understood in accordance with its own principles (*juxta propria principia*). Thought, apart from positive physical contact with the object to be investigated, appeared absurd to Telesio; he repudiated magic and astrology. We meet the same tendency in the work of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). He was certainly the most universal man produced by the Renaissance period: painter, scientist, technician, inventor, engineer, and architect all in one. For him experience became interpreter between creative nature and the human investigator. Its effectiveness springs from necessity, which is guided by reason. No law, no rule of nature can be formulated without mathematics. He sharply criticized magical doctrines, which still prevailed even in the fifteenth century. For Leonardo there are no forces that do not depend on material organs and material conditions. 'O mathematician,' he writes, 'throw light on this error! A spirit has no voice; for there can only be a voice where there is movement and convulsion of the air; there can only be convulsion of the air if there is an instrument, and an instrument cannot be incorporeal. Accordingly a spirit can have neither voice nor form nor force. . . . Where there are no nerves and bones there is also no force capable of manifesting itself in any kind of movement, such as is attributed

to those alleged spirits.’<sup>1</sup> The necessary causes of phenomena must be discovered by experiment. If nature proceeds from the simple to the complex, from cause to effect, thought must start with the complex phenomenon and resolve it analytically into its component parts. Leonardo had thereby already exactly described the foundations of Galileo’s analytical method. Yet he lacked the mathematical equipment which Galileo had at his disposal and which enabled him to found modern functional physics.

Only by reviving the Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* was it possible for Galileo to obtain a sure *a priori* epistemological method, in which empiricism and idea stand in a definite mutual relationship. Cassirer has very aptly characterized the essential foundation of this methodological postulate of Galileo, which is a result of profitable borrowing from antiquity: ‘Movement and even matter itself, regarded as objects of knowledge, possess ideality; for in each of them certain unchangeable elements which always bear the same relationship to one another, and are therefore their real mathematical laws, reveal themselves. Experience was thereby raised to the level of exact knowledge for the first time, or, as Galileo, at the beginning of the main investigations of the *Discourses*, says concerning spatial movement: “An entirely new body of knowledge about a very ancient object” was acquired. This result adequately expresses both the realist-empirical and the idealist tendencies of the Renaissance.’<sup>2</sup> Plato’s theory of knowledge had truly been revived in this case. This is merely *one* example of the revival of antiquity on the soil of humanism, which was taking place in many fields. Many years earlier, as spoil of his diplomatic journey to Constantinople, Cusanus had brought back to Italy a rich collection of ancient works. This process of unearthing and commenting upon ancient writings had been going on from the time when a number of Greek scholars emigrated to Italy after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, and even earlier.

<sup>1</sup> *Scritti letterari*, London 1883, ed. Richter, Nos. 1211, 1215.

<sup>2</sup> *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Leipzig 1927, p. 183.

About the same time the invention of printing made the dissemination of this new knowledge possible. Thus a new instrument of western knowledge was brought into use. The clergy had ceased to be almost the sole propagators of education, as they had been in the Middle Ages, and now lay knowledge entered upon its triumphal course in the west. Such a man as Erasmus of Rotterdam may be taken as a typical example. His real abode was the western world of the new humanities. When his works had carried him to the summit of success, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, and England vied with one another to provide the great humanist with a resting-place for his old age. He was at home wherever the elegant and flexible Latin of his works could charm and elevate man. But it is precisely the rich works of Erasmus which show how the new humanist knowledge was still entirely capable of being combined with the basic postulates of Christianity: ' . . . Christ wants to have His secret spread abroad, to the widest extent possible. And I should like all women to read the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul. And would that they were poured out in all tongues, so that Scotsmen and Irishmen, and also Turks and Saracens, might read and become acquainted with them. For acquaintance with them is certainly the first step. Possibly many may laugh at first, but some will be stirred. May the peasant sing a ditty from the Scriptures when ploughing, the weaver at his loom hum something therefrom, and the traveller shorten his journey with their stories. May the converse of Christians amongst themselves be taken from the Scriptures.'<sup>1</sup> He sees the ancient world from the standpoint of this spirit of universal and tolerant Christianity, and in this spirit he seeks to revive it and to liberate himself and his contemporaries from empty scholastic formulas. 'The world is coming to its senses as if awaking out of a deep sleep. Still there are some left who resist pertinaciously, clinging convulsively with hands and feet to their old ignorance. They fear that if *bonae literae* are reborn and the world grows wise, it will come to light that they know nothing.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Renaissance and Humanism*, ed. P. Joachimsen, Leipzig 1930, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by J. Huizinga, *Erasmus*, trans. F. Hopman, New York and London 1924, p. 131 f.

'They know not,' adds here Erasmus's distinguished biographer, Huizinga, 'how pious the ancients could be, what sanctity characterizes Socrates, Virgil, and Horace, or Plutarch's *Moralia*, how rich the history of antiquity is in *examples* [our italics] of forgiveness and true virtue. We should call nothing profane that is pious and conduces to good morals. No more dignified view of life was ever found than that which Cicero propounds in *De Senectute*.' <sup>1</sup> It is thus the lasting achievement of the humanist Renaissance to have transmitted antiquity and Christianity to the mind of western man.

It is now important to consider how Leonardo succeeded in incorporating art in his new 'mathematical conception of nature.' Abstract natural law and concrete perception must permeate one another. And here geometry may serve as a guide. For just as geometry portrays for us plastically the operation of the rules of reason, so art is governed by spatial forms and figures. Therefore Leonardo can with justice say: 'He who despises painting is also hostile to philosophy and nature.' Creative imagination becomes the instrument and condition of theoretical investigation: we understand not that which nature presents to us at random, but only that which we can shape and delineate in our own minds: 'O speculatore delle cose, non ti laudare di conoscere le cose che ordinariamente per se medesima la natura conduce; ma rallegrati di conoscere il fine di quelle cose che son disegniate dalla mente tua.' <sup>2</sup> Whoever has but cast a glance at a Leonardo painting will have perceived the complete harmony always expressed there between nature and spirit.

A new dynamic conception of nature became prevalent, which left the scholastic world of static forms far behind. Nothing in existence can escape the *general* laws of motion. Space no longer comprises the world, for the idea of the infinity of the cosmos is evolved. The human world is merely a world among worlds. Giordano Bruno stands out above all as the herald of this attitude towards the world. He exalts Copernicus's discovery in lyrical phrases: 'Who could eulogize as it deserves the lofty-mindedness of this German, who, heedless of the judgment of the foolish

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huizinga, *ibid.* p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *ibid.* No. 1205.

multitude and against the current of hostile opinion, first victoriously championed the true view—that view which has rescued our knowledge from the narrow prison wherein it only caught glimpses of the stars as through chance gaps, which has measured space, penetrated the heavens, and broken down the imaginary walls of the first, the eighth, the ninth, and tenth spheres.’<sup>1</sup> Here is a man conscious that he *knows* the principles of the infinite world.

And this infinite world is permeated with a harmonious beauty whose law and form have been transmitted to us in enduring fashion by the art of the Renaissance. The meaning of the world is enshrined within the laws of beauty. On the other hand the world discloses itself to man through beauty: thus we know of Kepler that he arrived at the conception of the laws of the planets through the ‘inborn’ idea of the Beautiful and of Number.

#### 4. FLORENCE AND MACHIAVELLI

With this general idea of Renaissance man in his relation to nature and the cosmos in our minds, we may now proceed to a *preliminary* sketch of the sphere of the State. ‘In Italy first of all . . .’ writes Jacob Burckhardt, ‘there awakened an *objective* consideration and treatment of the State.’ And in Italy it was mainly from the status and history of Florence that Niccolò Machiavelli undertook to establish law and rule for the life of the State. Even as the political thought of the western world derived its enduring and continually renewed basic categories from the Athenian city State, so that thought, enriched by the splendour of the human experience, was re-examined in the shrewd atmosphere of the Tuscan capital. The history of western civilization has revealed to us a peculiar and unique process of advance by stages—a Renaissance indeed. Jacob Burckhardt described this phenomenon in penetrating words: ‘The most elevated political thought and the most varied forms of human development are found united in the history of Florence, which in this sense deserves the name of the first modern

<sup>1</sup> *La cena de le ceneri*, Opere italiane, ed. Lagarde, p. 127 f.

State in the world. Here the whole people are busied with what, in despotic cities, is the affair of a single family. That wondrous Florentine spirit, at once keenly critical and artistically creative, was incessantly transforming the social and political condition of the State, and as incessantly describing and judging the change. Florence thus became the home of political doctrines and theories, of experiments and sudden changes, but also, like Venice, the home of statistical science, and, alone and above all other states in the world, the home of historical representation in the modern sense of the phrase. The spectacle of ancient Rome and a familiarity with its leading writers were not without influence.<sup>1</sup> It appears that knowledge and experience of political theory ripen only in times of deep and fundamental political change. Just as Plato and Aristotle drew their political doctrines from the fluctuating course of the Greek city states, and Polybius and Cicero from the great epochs of the Roman Empire, just as Hobbes's and Locke's political philosophies were nourished by the confusion of the Cromwellian revolution, just as Burke's political thought assumed definite shape in his refutation of the great French Revolution, and de Tocqueville and Georges Sorel became the great prophets of the age of mass-democracies in an agitated world, and just as we ourselves—late, slow, and ungrateful pupils of these great masters—have to reconstruct the political doctrine of our time out of the collapse of Weimar democracy in Germany and the rise of Fascism, so also the secretary of the Florentine Republic, Niccolò Machiavelli, was pupil of an age of crisis in the State and in politics. The constitution of Florence changed six times in the course of forty years. What an example for a thinker who was able to say of himself: 'I understand nothing about silk or wool weaving, about profit or loss; I only understand something about the State'! He certainly had opportunities to put his knowledge to the test.

After 1494 Italy became the battle-field of European armies. Germans, French, Spaniards fought for the Italian sphere of influence. The Italian States—Naples, the Papal State, Florence, Milan, and Venice—had hitherto kept one another in check, but now they were involved in a great European conflict. Only a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Burckhardt, *ibid.* p. 95.

united Italy, *Italia una*, could have held its own in these struggles. But a divided Italy, far removed from the old Roman example, could only become the plaything of the European powers. 'Italy,' writes the great Florentine, in harmony with Dante and Rienzi, 'has been brought to her present abject condition . . . more enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, more disunited than the Athenians, without a head, without order, beaten, spoiled, torn to pieces, overrun and abandoned to destruction in every shape.'<sup>1</sup> Thus at the end of *The Prince* the great national goal of a liberated Italy finds expression, a goal, it is true, which was only to be realized three hundred years later by Cavour.

History appears to Machiavelli as a model and a teacher of reality. He plunges deeply into Aristotle, Polybius, and Livy, to whose first ten books of the history of Rome he devotes a detailed 'commentary,' which, side by side with *The Prince*, is among his most important works. History became Machiavelli's teacher precisely because he had no idea of progress. Thus in his *Decades* he writes: 'Any one comparing the present with the past will soon perceive that in all cities and in all nations there prevail the same desires and passions as always have prevailed; for which reason it should be an easy matter for him who carefully examines past events, to foresee those which are about to happen in any republic, and to apply such remedies as the ancients have used in like cases; or finding none which have been used by them, to strike out new ones, such as they might have used in similar circumstances. But these lessons being neglected or not understood by readers, or, if understood by them, being unknown to rulers, it follows that the same disorders are common to all times.'<sup>2</sup> All legislation and all political organization must proceed from the fact that all men are to be regarded as basically evil. ' . . . The world, remaining continually *the same* [our italics], has in it a constant quantity of good and evil; but this good and this evil shift about from one country to another, as we know that in ancient times empire shifted from one nation to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. N. H. Thomson, Oxford 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli, *Discourses*, trans. N. H. Thomson, London 1883, i, Chap. XXXIX.

another, according as the manners of these nations changed, the world, as a whole, continuing as before, and the only difference being that, whereas at first Assyria was made the seat of its excellence, this was afterwards placed in Media, then in Persia, until at last it was transferred to Italy and Rome. And although after the Roman Empire, none has followed which has endured, or in which the world has centred its whole excellence, we nevertheless find that excellence diffused among many valiant nations.’<sup>1</sup> This passage recalls Otto von Freising’s special idea of *translatio*, although Machiavelli also understood quite clearly the dynamic forces of the State. It is still a long way to Galileo’s new functional physics, whence Hobbes derived the constructive principle of his political theory. Machiavelli’s method is still inductive and experimental, just as the empirical magic of his contemporaries employed experiment and comparison of phenomena. In this respect Leonardo was in advance of Machiavelli. Whereas *The Prince* appears to advocate arbitrary power, the *Discourses* are concerned with republican freedom. The main emphasis, however, may be said to lie on the latter. Machiavelli actually wrote of *The Prince*, which is dedicated to Lorenzo de’ Medici: ‘The distress which hangs like a millstone around my neck drove me to this dedication.’

In his much discussed *virtù* theory Machiavelli describes the fundamental political qualities capable of ensuring stable government. ‘. . . An extremely rich concept, undoubtedly borrowed from antiquity and humanism but experienced and moulded by Machiavelli himself; one which certainly included moral qualities, but which in its nature was designed to describe something dynamic placed in man’s hands by nature—heroism and a capacity for great political and military achievements, above all for the foundation and maintenance of flourishing states, and especially free states. He saw in free states—for which Rome of the republican period was ever his ideal—the most favourable conditions for the generation of *virtù*. This included both the virtue of the citizen and of the ruler, selfless devotion to the community as well as the wisdom and ambition of great founders and leaders of states. He ranked the *virtù* required in a leader of a State as

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. bk. ii, Preface.



*virtù* of a higher order. It was this which, in his view, distilled from the really poor material of the general run of mankind, through appropriate "order," civic virtue—in a sense a second grade of *virtù*, only capable of persisting in the soil of a robust and uncorrupted people. . . . His concept of *virtù* thus created an inner bridge between republican and monarchist tendencies, which enabled him, without loss of principle, to place his hopes on the rule of the Medici princes after the collapse of the Florentine Free State, and to write *The Prince* for them. It enabled him immediately afterwards to resume the republican thread and to weigh the relative merits of republic and principality.<sup>1</sup> Over against *virtù* stands *fortuna*. 'Wherever men are weak, Fortune shows herself strong. And because she changes, states and governments change with her; and will continue to change until someone arise, who, following reverently the example of the ancients, shall so control her, that she shall not have opportunity with every revolution of the sun to display anew the greatness of her power.'<sup>2</sup> The will of man is able to control fate. Did not Pico, Machiavelli's contemporary, say: 'It is given to him to have what he desires and to be that which he wills'?

Finally the concept of *necessità* is added to those of *virtù* and *fortuna*. 'Elsewhere I have noted,' we read again in the *Discourses*,<sup>3</sup> 'how greatly men are governed in what they do by necessity, and how much of their renown is due to her guidance, so that it has even been said by some philosophers, that the hands and tongues of men, the two noblest instruments of their fame, would never have worked to perfection, nor have brought their labours to that pitch of excellence we see them to have reached, had they not been impelled by this cause. The captains of antiquity, therefore, knowing the virtues of this necessity, and seeing the steadfast courage which it gave their soldiers in battle, spared no effort to bring their armies under its influence.' *Necessità* moulds men into the shape required by *virtù*. In Chapter XV of *The Prince* Machiavelli formulated the principle which has remained associated with his name up to the present day—

<sup>1</sup> F. Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, Munich 1929, pp. 39 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourses*, ii, Chap. XXX.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii, Chap. XII.

Machiavellianism. Few sentences in his polished and hard language equal these: 'Many Republics and Princedoms have been imagined that were never seen or known to exist in reality. And the manner in which we live, and that in which we ought to live, are things so wide asunder that he who quits the one to betake himself to the other is more likely to destroy than to save himself; since any one acting up to a perfect standard of goodness in everything must be ruined among so many who are not good. It is essential, therefore, for a Prince who would maintain his position to have learned how to be other than good, and to use or not to use his goodness as necessity requires. . . . Every one, I know, would admit that it would be most laudable for a Prince to be endowed with all the qualities that are reckoned good; but since it is impossible for him to possess or constantly practise them all, the conditions of human nature not allowing it, he must be discreet enough to know how to avoid the reproach of those vices that would deprive him of his government, and, if possible, be on his guard also against those which might not deprive him of it; though if he cannot wholly restrain himself, he may with less scruple indulge in the latter.' A man who could write this had certainly nothing left in common with the old Catholic world order. As a diplomat and envoy of his native city, Florence, Machiavelli had acquired all too deep an insight into papal policy. Caesar Borgia, son of the Pope, has with justice been regarded as the model of his Prince.

Such statements never lost their hold upon the centuries which followed. They might be used as a text for a history of western political thought, so deeply have they agitated thinkers, both those who accepted and those who rejected them. The other political doctrines of the Florentine fade in comparison with the historical effect of these sentences. In conformity with the ancient and Roman tradition Machiavelli distinguished six forms of government, arranged in three pairs: monarchy—despotism, aristocracy—oligarchy, democracy—anarchy. In agreement with Cicero and Thomas Aquinas he favoured a mixed form of government. But more important for him than the *form* of government was its *stability*. The final crystallization of his experiences, however, and his contribution to experimental state-

craft, is not the mixed monarchy of Thomist State theory, but a kind of *authoritarian republic*, the structure of which is characterized by Pierre Mesnard as follows: ' . . . Machiavel incline . . . vers un régime populaire, administré par un vigoureux pouvoir central assisté d'une organisation fortement hiérarchisée. Le tout forme une institution indiscutablement démocratique, mais du genre particulier que l'on est convenu d'appeler la république autoritaire.'<sup>1</sup> He endows this republic with maxims which betray a boundless understanding of the dynamics of the growth of states. 'Those republics,' he says in the *Discourses*, 'which cannot in sudden emergencies resort either to a dictator or some similar authority, will, when the danger is serious, always be undone.' Again: 'The ordinary institutions of a commonwealth work but slowly, no council and no magistrate having authority to act in everything alone . . . and time being required to reconcile their differences, the remedies which they provide are most dangerous when they have to be applied in cases which do not brook delay.'

Religion he regarded as a key instrument for unifying the State. Religion, laws, and the army are described in the *Discourses* as the three pillars of the State. He struggled during his lifetime to obtain an effective army recruited from the people, but centuries were to pass before the full significance of his demand was to be understood. In view of Machiavelli's sceptical conception of man we need scarcely dwell at all on his insistence upon the necessity of laws. It is necessary only to say a word concerning his attitude to religion, which should, indeed, have become clear from the foregoing. He reproached the Catholic religion with weakening men in contrast to the 'religion of the ancients,' which canonized only such men as captains of armies and rulers of republics: 'Our religion glorifies men of a humble and contemplative, rather than of an active, life. . . . This manner of life, therefore, seems to have made the world feebler, and to have given it over as a prey to wicked men to deal with as they please; since the mass of mankind, in the hope of being received into Paradise, think more how to bear injuries than how to

<sup>1</sup> *L'Essor de la philosophie politique au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1936, p. 59 f.

avenge them. But should it seem that the world has grown effeminate and Heaven laid aside her arms, this assuredly results from the baseness of those who have interpreted our religion to accord with indolence and ease rather than with valour. For were we to remember that religion permits the exaltation and defence of our country, we would see it to be our duty to love and honour it, and would strive to be able and ready to defend it.' <sup>1</sup> A deep national feeling inspired the secretary of the Florentine Republic. But the Church put all his works on the *Index*, as one can well understand. To this day they retain their reputation for being dangerous, but this has not lessened their influence and significance.

#### 5. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Just as modern political consciousness first came to life in Florence, so also we may there observe the rhythm of a middle-class civilization, destined as a model for the subsequent evolution of western society. One must, however, be on one's guard against treating the achievements of the Italian Renaissance exclusively as an 'expression' of social relations, as has been interestingly done by Alfred von Martin.<sup>2</sup> Everything that men have done and aspired to in the history of civilization is related to its social context. This relation may be traced and ascertained (as is done in the so-called sociology of knowledge), but the historical achievement itself is not exhausted in its relation to its social setting: a work of art, for example, is not only the 'expression' of a certain social situation of the artist; it is also *beautiful*. And with this beauty it enters history and continues to exert its effect when we have long forgotten the specific social situation of the painter. Hegel called this aspect of art 'absolute spirit.' Modern sociology, if it is to avoid degenerating into a sort of sociological criminology, must also incorporate the sphere of this 'absolute spirit' into its treatment of society.

We have already indicated in the previous chapter the capitalist

<sup>1</sup> *Discourses*, ii, Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his book, *Soziologie der Renaissance*, Stuttgart 1932.

trend of the Florentine city republic. The guilds of the *mercatores*, which conducted trade with distant parts and the monetary transactions connected with them, reduced the 'lower' guilds to dependence. The richer the merchant class became, that is the more it developed into a class of great capitalists, the more did the 'political democracy' of the Florentine State become a mask for plutocratic rule. The transition to Lorenzo's principality in no way ran counter to the conservative sympathies of the great capitalists. The principality was thereby better able to suppress the restless masses of craftsmen and 'proletarians' working under the domestic system. It is perhaps no exaggeration to call Machiavelli the sixteenth-century Spengler, who, as a national democrat, exposed the political failure of capitalist liberalism, a liberalism which had placed the interests of money and security before defensive strength. 'For a capitalist class which is no longer capable of maintaining the defences of the country there only remains the ideal of *individual* freedom—understood either in an economic or humanist sense—a freedom *from* the State.'<sup>1</sup> Court society of modern times arose in this atmosphere. The wealthy families, in origin great capitalists, took as their model the old nobility which, for its part, had saved itself by adapting itself to the new social conditions. 'The existence of great wealth is the *economic*, the consolidation of the absolute State the *political*, the decline of the knights and the 'urbanization' of the nobility the *social* precondition of the modern court.'<sup>2</sup> More than forty impressions of Castiglione's *Cortegiano* appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century. The court attracted scholars and artists and a new court poetry arose. We need only mention here the names of Ariosto and Tasso. The Church did not hinder this development. The Curia played, together with Florence, a leading part in introducing a new exactitude in money matters on the basis of double-entry bookkeeping. 'In Renaissance Rome everything without exception could be had for money.'<sup>3</sup> When Savonarola's democratically based Friars' Republic appeared to endanger the new 'order,' the Church joined hands with the Medici. Savonarola finished at the stake.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. von Martin, *ibid.* p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

The Church removed the ideological obstacles to the modern pursuit of gain through a new interpretation of the basic Thomist doctrines. 'The exposition of Cardinal Cajetan de Vio [died 1534] undermined the decisive importance of ['natural'] *estate*—that is, of the static factor—through the recognition of the right of [natural] *endowment*—the right of outstanding qualities [*virtutes*], which enable a person to rise above his own estate . . . which, according to the principles of natural law, he deserves. . . . Individual personality carried the day and theology recognized the fact, precisely in reference to the economic sphere. The *cumulare pecunias* received the approval of the Church.'<sup>1</sup>

The course followed by the new middle-class civilization, here briefly described, provided, in fact, a model. It is obvious that this development was not restricted to Florence, even in the age of the Renaissance, although it was there most clearly defined and most thorough-going. We are to encounter the same processes again in the Puritan revolution in seventeenth-century England; it characterizes the course of the French Revolution; it is repeated in the history of Fascist Italy, and finally in the decline of the so-called Weimar Republic in Germany. The 'law' (if it is such) governing these changes only explains to us the attitude of the capitalist class. It tells us nothing about the other very complex factors which govern the life of modern mass-states.

The new economic convictions of the Florentine merchants found their classic formulation in Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *Del governo della famiglia*. Even Alberti's contemporaries in the fifteenth century regarded his doctrines as classic. Although a certain conservative trait was already present in Alberti, in that he preferred real to personal property, his basic attitude is nevertheless expressly anti-seigneurial. Thrift is one of the new essential rational virtues of the merchant. 'Bear this in mind, my sons, never let your expenditure be greater than your receipts.' He condemned idleness. We must devote soul, body, and, above all, our time to the management of our business. 'He who does not waste his time can do almost everything; and he who is able to employ his time well will soon become master of all types of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 120 f.

activity.' Alberti was already able to impress upon his readers that time is money, that 'Profits increase because our industry and our labour become greater with the extension of business,' a dictum which figured strongly in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* in the eighteenth century. The foundations of the new business ethic were examined in great detail. 'There has never been any one in our family,' writes Alberti, 'who has broken his word in contracts. . . . Our family have always observed the greatest degree of simplicity and truthfulness in making contracts and have thereby become known in Italy and abroad as great and worthy merchants.' The new business ethic was rooted in an equally new spirit of exact calculation, which also started out on its conquest of the world from Florence. We find beginnings of precise calculation as early as in Leonardo Pisano's *Liber Abbaci* of the year 1202. We encounter systematic single-entry bookkeeping in the statements of account of Pope Nicholas III for the years 1279-80 and in the expenditure cash-book of the city of Florence for the year 1303. Afterwards double-entry bookkeeping was expounded in the eleventh section of Luca Paciolo's famous *Summa Arithmetica*; but the introduction of the balance-sheet, which completes the rationalization of modern business, did not occur until the seventeenth century.

This process of increasing rationalization of calculation as the foundation of modern business life was a corollary of the new turn towards nature, the main features of which we have already sketched. Man learned to analyse natural phenomena rationally. And, understanding them, he attempted to control them. We have been able to follow this tendency also in Machiavelli's combination of politics and science—the determination to know, in order to foresee. Valuable investigations have been devoted to the connection between natural and applied science in the Renaissance period. The work of Olschki in particular has recently traced this connection in great detail.<sup>1</sup> Leonardo, for example, was thoroughly aware of the fruitful interaction between applied and natural science. Thus the results of his calculations on his experiments concerning levers have been recognized in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his work, *Geschichte der neusprachlichen wissenschaftlichen Literatur*, Leipzig 1919-27.

the latest physico-mathematical research, although this process only reached perfection with Galileo.

One of the most important advances in applied science made in the fifteenth century was the invention of iron-casting and the transition to blast-furnace methods. The extraction of iron thereby underwent an enormous extension of output, and this proved particularly advantageous for military purposes. Ordnance manufacture expanded rapidly. The invention of the amalgamating process in 1557 represented an important advance on the methods of extracting silver. The introduction in 1530 of the foot-pedal on the spinning-wheel, which had previously been turned by hand, led to an acceleration of the spinning process. Progress in the measurement of time was also the work of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The compass was first used in the sixteenth century. Instruments for determining location at sea were invented at the end of the fifteenth century. Without these the age of the Renaissance would scarcely have been the epoch of great colonial discoveries. The discovery of the sea route to India, the discovery of America, etc., are universally known facts and a complete list of them can be found in any handbook. In referring to the progress of applied science we have limited ourselves merely to a few general headings. Werner Sombart has dealt with the subject at length in his comprehensive work, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*.<sup>1</sup>

We have used the example of Florence to draw attention to the basic features of the economic development of the period and we shall now endeavour to outline its course in Europe as a whole. Economic history has so far scarcely devoted the necessary attention to the contrast between the economic structure of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and that of the period which we commonly call the mercantile epoch. Whereas economic development from the thirteenth and fourteenth to the sixteenth century was characterized by the predominance of *private* initiative in foreign trade, at the end of the sixteenth century we find an unmistakable slackening off of this private initiative, and its replacement by *State* initiative. The creator of French mercantilism, Colbert, complained 'that our merchants have no

<sup>1</sup> See especially vol. i. 2, pp. 463 ff.



initiative to enter upon enterprises that are unfamiliar to them.' The body of leading Italian and South German merchants engaged in international trade ceased to exist. This curious structural change in the economic system is explained as follows in the recently published inquiry of a German investigator: 'State activity extends from mining into other branches of the export trade. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards the supply of capital is increasingly curtailed as a result of the credit and war requirements of governments. State intervention in business enterprise is linked with a growing series of other types of intervention, aimed eventually at making the boundaries of the economic units coincident with those of the State and thereby abolishing the existing territorial division of labour and of functions in European economic life.'<sup>1</sup> This in itself, however, does not reveal the change in social structure, which we have still to examine. The business man of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries acted independently of the State, though the latter availed itself of his help, as is shown by the example of Jacques Cœur in France and that of the Fuggers in Germany. After the end of the fifteenth century no merchant or trader experienced any restraint on the grounds that he was a capitalist. The business man could join hands with the State for a while, because the nascent modern (absolute) State appeared to guarantee his business interests against feudal restrictions. The business man was guided solely by his profit interest. The State, on the other hand, was guided predominantly by the interest of power, although the profit interest and the pursuit of power were linked. The state-protection and monopolies granted to the English merchant adventurers spoke expressly of ensuring 'well-ordered and ruled trade' in accordance with 'the ideal of medieval commerce.' From this it is clear how deeply the economic ideas of the State in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were still rooted in the Middle Ages. Not till the end of the sixteenth and during the seventeenth century did State monopoly and State regulation of trade and industry become an intolerable burden to the capitalist, and not till then began that struggle against mer-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Clemens Bauer, *Unternehmung und Unternehmungsformen im Spätmittelalter und in der beginnenden Neuzeit*, Jena 1936, p. 2 f.

cantilism which was finally won by economic liberalism. John Locke's political theory appeared at the end of this movement.

Now is the moment to consider how far the reformation of the Church initiated by Luther and Calvin assisted the development of capitalism. Penetrating inquiries have been devoted to this question since the publication of Weber's essays on the business ethics of Protestantism. We must content ourselves here with referring to the fundamental works of R. H. Tawney, and to the recently published work of the Italian economic historian, A. Fanfani, which in part supplements and corrects Tawney's investigations. We shall return to this problem from another angle in the chapter devoted to Germany. At present we emphasize the point that both Luther and Calvin were too anti-capitalistically-minded deliberately to promote the development of capitalism. But seeing that both disputed the connection between earthly deeds and heavenly reward, they both removed restrictions on earthly conduct, and the capitalist could judge his activity by exclusively economic criteria.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now sketch briefly the important changes in economic geography which are to be seen at the end of the sixteenth century. European economy gradually moved from central and southern Europe to the west, mainly as a consequence of the discovery of America and of the sea route to India. To these influences was added the conquest of Constantinople by Islam in the fifteenth century, which interfered seriously with Italian trade connections. New national states had arisen in the east and north, and Denmark and Russia contributed to the destruction of the power of the Hanseatic League. Thus the economic decline of central Europe was decided even before the Thirty Years War. Western Europe was divided into the Catholic south (Spain and Portugal) and the Protestant north. 'Spain and Portugal had to suffer for the medieval spirit of their commercial and colonial system, which constituted the greatness and also the weakness of their politics and civilization.'<sup>2</sup> France, weakened by the Huguenot wars,

<sup>1</sup> For the differences between Calvin's and Luther's attitude towards capitalism see the important references given in R. N. Carew Hunt's *Calvin*, London 1933.

<sup>2</sup> C. Brinkmann, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, Munich 1927, p. 92.

remained far behind Holland and England in economic importance.

## 6. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE STATE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

We have seen that the meaning of the modern State was first grasped in Italy. Let us now pass to a consideration of the philosophy of the State outside Italy, though without committing ourselves to presenting a complete picture of western political thought during this period. We shall discuss only Bodin and Hooker at any length. In the latter half of the sixteenth century the so-called *Monarchomachi*, defending confessional liberty, developed the view that the relationship between monarch and people should be treated as a contractual relationship. In so doing they did not oppose kingship as such but only those monarchs who refused to submit to the *jus divinum* and the *jus naturale*, and also (which is the main point) to the *leges*. Recent research has shown that the emphasis which was laid upon the *positive law* made the old scholastic formulas less important. Certainly, the *Monarchomachi* used the traditional scholastic terms, but the stress and influence of their writings resulted from a new valuation of the positive laws and functions of the State.<sup>1</sup> In their view the supreme power of the State resided in the people. Suarez, the great Spanish constitutional lawyer, stood very close to the *Monarchomachi* in this regard. Althusius in his *Polity* (1603) associated himself with the movement, and from him its ideas passed into Locke's political theory.

Bodin (1530-96), a parliamentarian and jurist, undoubtedly gives the most mature statement of sixteenth-century political theory. His principal work, *Les Six Livres de la République*, was first published in 1576, and Bodin himself translated it into Latin in 1586. He was the first modern constitutional lawyer to teach the indivisibility of sovereignty, in which Hobbes was later to follow him. Nevertheless there are important distinctions between Bodin's idea of the State and that in the *Leviathan* of the English thinker. Bodin's method is empirical and comparative,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Wolzendorff, *Staatsrecht und Naturrecht in der Lehre von Widerstandsrecht des Volkes gegen rechtswidrige Ausübung der Staatsgewalt*, Breslau 1916.

not in the same way as that of Machiavelli, who was always, as it were, on the point of action, but in his very scholarly arrangement of a wealth of material, from which the laws of historical evolution are deduced with extreme care. Machiavelli's thought was directed solely towards the State—'I only understand something about the State,' he declared of himself. The Frenchman, Bodin, on the other hand, had a much more universal field of vision. He produces not a treatise on the State but a broadly based doctrine of the manifold ramifications of political life. Employing modern terms, one might call Machiavelli a scholarly pragmatist of statecraft, whereas Bodin's sphere would be termed that of State sociology. The two thinkers are, however, separated by two generations, and Bodin, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, had at his disposal quite different and much more exact knowledge of the essential historical conditions of political science. His real aim was as follows: 'Nous voulons recueillir les lois des anciens dispersées çà et là, car c'est dans l'histoire qu'est contenue la meilleure partie du droit universel; et ce qui est très utile pour l'appréciation judicieuse des lois, c'est d'elle que nous pouvons apprendre les mœurs des nations, les fondements de l'État, ses développements, ses formes, ses révolutions et sa fin; tel est le principal objet de cette méthode. En effet, la première utilité de l'histoire est de servir à la politique.'<sup>1</sup> Mesnard has called Bodin's political science, as contrasted with that of Machiavelli, 'integral empiricism,' in that Bodin incorporates into his thought the great fundamental moral forces of history—morals, law, and justice. The idea of justice is, in fact, the central driving force with Bodin. It is scarcely possible to express more sharply than thus his contrast with Machiavelli, whom he abhorred and very largely misunderstood.

The natural, or perhaps better, the individual, law of any nation is produced by the concrete natural facts of its history. But this law, once created, moves towards a universal norm imposed on it by the idea of justice. Let us follow for a moment Mesnard, who has given a masterly exposition of this relation as formulated by Bodin. 'Non seulement le fait est ainsi source de droit, mais des rapports de fait peuvent se transposer aisément en rapports

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Mesnard, *ibid.* p. 540.

de droit. C'est ainsi que la famille étant dans l'évolution sociale la donnée primitive, antérieure à l'état politique proprement dit, les droits de la famille deviendront des droits premiers et par conséquent intangibles à l'autorité politique même sous la forme absolue de la souveraineté. Mais si le fait s'exprime souvent en droit, il n'en reste pas moins que la vraie relation de l'un à l'autre est la finalité consciente par laquelle le droit poursuit à l'intérieur d'une situation donnée son travail incessant, la réalisation concrète de la justice, le passage de l'État de fait à l'État de droit. C'est que le droit c'est la raison, et seule la raison peut unir volontairement les hommes et les organiser entre eux. . . . Lier les bons et les méchants entre eux, leur faire accepter dans ce commerce la volonté éclairée du prince, et mettre au cœur de celui-ci la justice, voilà au fond tout le secret de la politique.' <sup>1</sup> At the end of the sixteenth century, men had grown tired of the perpetual wars and religious strife which rent countries asunder: they longed for *harmony* which arises from peace within the State.

Let us now examine more closely the structure of the State as it appears to Bodin. He defines it as an association of a number of families, governed by a supreme power and by justice, in which private property is separate from State property. The unity of the supreme power in the State, which is subordinate only to God, lies in sovereignty (*summa potestas*). It is significant, however, that Bodin understands by sovereignty only the supreme power in the State, to which private property, which is the right of the private individual, is *not* subordinate. In this respect he is a genuine representative of the *tiers état*, which, indeed, he also represented in parliament: only absolute monarchy was able to safeguard the trading class of the sixteenth century from the encroachments of the feudal nobility—we remind our readers of our earlier remarks on this point—and it alone was able to end the religious wars which deranged commercial activity, to restore equality in law, and to unite France. His ideal is a kind of absolute hereditary monarchy which he would have liked to see introduced in France. Bodin distinguished two forms of government: one with rights of sovereignty and the other without sovereignty. The first form devolves upon the monarch, the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 544 f.

second upon the magistrates. The sovereign can create law, but he can also repeal it. But natural law, to which the monarch is also subject, demands that promises once made be kept, for otherwise public confidence, of which the monarch is protector, would be destroyed. The linking of the supreme power of the State to *jus divinum* and *jus naturale* is therefore still taken for granted by Bodin.

It is not possible here to enter into Bodin's interesting ethnological and geopolitical views, which, in particular, influenced Montesquieu. Brief reference must, however, be made to the proposals relative to taxation which he presented in Book VI of his *Republic*. He there raised a demand for a complete survey and statement of every man's occupation and property, and a reliable register of landed property. Only on this basis was it possible to establish a just system of taxes which would not impose a disproportionately heavy burden of taxation on the poorer strata of the population. He also rejected the exemption of the clergy and nobility from taxation as unfair to the *tiers état* for which he was a spokesman.

Finally his analyses of the budget and of an ordered system of public finance as well as his notes on monetary reform reveal the new calculating spirit of the age of capitalism. A deep conviction of the divine harmony in the world and in the State appears in the closing sentences of the *Republic*: 'Or tout ainsi que par voix et sons contraires, il se compose une douce et naturelle harmonie, aussi des vices et des vertus, des qualitez differentes des elemens, des mouvemens contraires, et des sympathies et antipathies liees par moyens inviolables, se compose *l'harmonie* [our italics] de ce monde et de ses parties: comme aussi la Republique est composee de bons et mauvais, de riches et de pauvres, de sages et de fols, de forts et de foibles, alliez par ceux qui sont moyens entre les uns et les autres: estant tousiours le bien plus puissant que le mal, et les accords plus que les discords. Et tout ainsi que l'unité sus les trois premiers nombres, l'intellect sus les trois parties de l'âme, le point indivisible sus la ligne superficie, et le corps: ainsi peut on dire, que ce grand Roy eternel, unique, pur, simple, indivisible, eslevé par-dessus le monde elementaire, celeste et intelligible, unist les trois ensemble, faisant reluire la

splendeur de sa maiesté et la douceur de l'harmonie divine en tout ce monde, à l'exemple duquel le sage Roy se doit conformer, et gouverner son Royaume.'<sup>1</sup>

The idea of harmony in Bodin's theory of the State provides an easy bridge to the idea of tolerance, advocated so forcibly in his work *Heptaplomeres*, which, indeed, was not published until the nineteenth century but which was circulated in numerous manuscript copies from the sixteenth century onwards. The aged Leibniz, who was to follow similar lines in his plan for a united religion, had already suggested the printing of Bodin's talks. The *Heptaplomeres* was a religious conversation, in which representatives of six different religions came together for a friendly discussion. A Catholic, a Lutheran, a Calvinist, a Jew, and a representative of 'Natural Religion,' and finally an Indifferentist, are introduced as representatives of different religious points of view which are merely varieties of Natural Religion. Belief in ONE God, a basic moral conviction (as the *post factum* formulation of which Bodin regarded the decalogue), belief in freedom, in immortality, and in retribution in the next world, are the essential characteristics of Natural Religion. There is no one criterion of true religion. 'The genuine ring was presumably lost,' as Lessing, following Boccaccio's fable of the ring, remarked later in his *Nathan the Wise*. It is the task of the State to protect and tolerate every religion. Bodin traced their historical, geographical, and climatic origins, in doing which he opened up paths along which Vico and Montesquieu were to follow him later. The *Heptaplomeres* is a vivid demonstration of Bodin's longing for peace after the long religious struggles which had brought France to the verge of a precipice, and had placed him in instant danger of death on St Bartholomew's night. In the idea of tolerance we touch a fundamental driving force of the Renaissance period, the importance of which extends beyond that epoch. Bodin is, as we have seen, truly representative of the *tiers état*. But truth, if it is really true, is not merely the truth of one class.

The idea of tolerance gives expression to a fundamental aspect of western man. All men are not equal, but all are free. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bodin, *Les Six Livres de la République*, 1579 ed., p. 1058.

point is that this freedom must not be understood as a privilege of the capitalist class—although, as we have clearly seen in the case of Bodin, it was this class which formulated the idea of the autonomy of man as a battle-cry against the privileged classes of nobility and clergy. The autonomy of man must undoubtedly be realized to-day by a new centralized organization of society and of the State which will integrate all classes without oppressing them. Only so can there be real and genuine freedom. It is significant that in a newly published book, *The Condition of Britain* by G. D. H. and M. I. Cole, we read: 'For two centuries at least, western Europe has been gradually moving from the worship of enforced uniformity to the toleration of tolerance . . .' Even purely descriptive economic and sociological research into facts is driven, as is shown by the example of the Coles, to seek guidance in the epoch-making fundamental political postulates of the west.

The idea of tolerance was uppermost already in the mind of Cusanus, and in Ficino's Christian-Platonist philosophy of history. Cusanus, in his dialogue *De pace fidei*, demanded the union of religions. So long as this unity was not achieved 'there will also be no end to persecution. For difference gives rise to separation and enmities, hatred and war.' But it is not the *works* of man, he teaches, following St Paul, but the *faith* of man alone that leads to eternal bliss. For all institutions and customs are merely outward signs of the true faith, and these signs alone, not that which is signified, are subject to alteration and change. 'Quo admissio, non turbabunt varietates illae rituum, nam ut signa sensibilia veritatis fidei sunt instituta et recepta: signa autem mutationem capiunt, non signatum.'<sup>1</sup> The idea of the Divine is implied even in polytheism. Ficino followed this train of thought—which provides a true justification for the idea of religious tolerance—when he saw religion as embodied in the totality of historical forms of faith. Genuine Christianity does not require that the opponents of that faith should be exterminated but that they should be convinced by reason, converted by instruction, or quietly tolerated.<sup>2</sup> For Divine Providence does not permit that there should ever be a part of the earth without some

<sup>1</sup> Cusanus, *De pace fidei*, Chap. XV.

<sup>2</sup> Ficino *De christ. rel.*, Chap. VIII.



kind of divine worship. To Divine Providence worship itself is more than any particular set of rites and gestures. What appears to be the lowest and most ridiculous type of belief and worship is pleasing to Providence in so far as it is but a *human* form and an expression of human nature with its necessary limitations.<sup>1</sup> Ficino thereby moved forward to a *new* conception of history which shattered the medieval world of ideas. The fall of man and his salvation are no longer the only historically relevant poles, as they were to St Augustine. Cassirer has drawn attention to what is new in Ficino's position. 'If *all* spiritual values contained in the history of mankind are reduced to and founded on a uniform revelation, then the idea is implicit . . . that this very unity of revelation which is sought for is to be sought in the *whole* of history and in the totality of its forms.' A new concept of historical criticism was thereby evolved which did not shrink from scrutiny of ecclesiastical historiography. From this standpoint Valla was able to expose the Donation of Constantine as a falsification, and Erasmus set his hand to the expurgation of the text of the Vulgate.

Bodin's political and social thought was built on a new historical and natural approach to man. With the adaptation of thought to the categories of history and nature the new idea of tolerance was discovered. And since human reason was understood as natural, and as that which is naturally turned towards nature, the Renaissance period discovered in State and society their own laws of motion. God manifests himself in religion *and* in nature.

The political thought of the Continent was transmitted to England chiefly by Richard Hooker (1554-1600). His work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is to be regarded not only as the principal political work of the Elizabethan period; it is at the same time a real link between the later medieval political thought of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua and the political philosophy of Hobbes, Harrington, and John Locke. Hooker introduced into English political thought the contract theory, which provided

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ficino, *ibid.* Chap. IV, and E. Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Berlin 1927, from which these references are taken.

the true foundation of the middle-class philosophy of the State. This had not emerged in the structure of Bodin's system, because civic freedom was already implicit in the concept of the family which dominated his whole system. Hooker incorporated civic freedom expressly in the theory of contract. His *Polity* was published ten years *before* Althusius's chief work. 'If therefore when there was but as yet one family in the world, no means of instruction human or divine could prevent effusion of blood; how could it be chosen but that when families were multiplied and increased upon earth, after separation each providing for itself, envy, strife, contention, and violence must grow among them? . . . To take away all such mutual grievances, injuries, and wrongs, there was no way but only by growing unto composition and agreement amongst themselves, by ordaining some kind of government public, and by yielding themselves subject thereunto; that unto whom they granted authority to rule and govern, by them the peace, tranquillity, and happy estate of the rest might be procured.'<sup>1</sup> Locke's doctrine of property was not actually to be found in Hooker, although it was implied. The doctrine of the separation of powers is also clearer in Locke.

Hooker conceived natural law expressly as the law of reason. In this he followed the Thomist tradition, but his main emphasis was already on the law of reason, which he derived directly from human reason, although human reason springs from the Divine. Reason enables man to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil. In this respect Hooker, like Bodin, belonged to the Enlightenment, though it is true that when human reason proves inadequate he bows humbly before God's majesty. The Englishman, however, differed from the Frenchman in his conception of the doctrine of sovereignty. Sovereignty is represented by Parliament; Parliament alone is able to create laws binding for the individual: Parliament represents king and subjects. Nevertheless Hooker stressed the principle of the legitimacy of monarchs, and in this he was a true son of the Elizabethan age, of which Bodin could say that the English had been led to humanity by a peace-loving queen.

Hooker bitterly attacked the Puritan separation of Church and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hooker, *Laws, etc.*, Everyman ed., i. 10, § 3 and § 4.

State; but the scales were already tending to come down on the side of the State. The Church was not exhausted in its actual political and social form. *Ecclesia invisibilis*, *ecclesia visibilis*, and *ecclesia* as *societas politica* were clearly distinguished from one another. Man knows nothing about the election of grace. Hooker, in distinguishing between fundamental and accessory truths in the creeds of the Church, also became a champion of the idea of tolerance—although not so markedly as Bodin who was strongly influenced by the French scepticism of Charron. Hooker believed he had furnished a guarantee of freedom of conscience in the acknowledgment of fundamental religious truths. He was a rationalist and an upholder of the Anglican Church, and he still maintained that the peaceful, rational conviction of persons holding contrary religious points of view was possible. It is the same fundamental viewpoint that illuminates the life and work of Erasmus—a deep faith in the moral education and generally conciliatory nature of western man.

We have now endeavoured to outline the permanent features of the Renaissance period; not its wars, nor its shortcomings, which chiefly appear in the German Peasants' War and in the unparalleled cruelties and harshnesses with which Spaniards and Portuguese founded their colonial empires, or with which, in England, in the words of the great Thomas More, 'sheep fed on men' in order to pave the way for modern capitalism. The veil of the Middle Ages was torn away. Man, Nature, and the State shine in the brightness of the rising sun.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE NEW WORLD OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SINCE the days of the Greek *polis*, since the prime of the Middle Ages, no epoch has achieved such an inner unity and momentum as the seventeenth century. Humanism, Renaissance, and Reformation had by then destroyed the foundations of medieval unity and traced the main outlines of a new world, leaving to the seventeenth century the task of completing the structure. The State, political theory, science, legal relations, economy, the conception of man—all were approached from the basis of uniform leading ideas and moulded into a *new* unity. The universalistic medieval world order which directed men's thoughts towards the next world was now opposed by a universalism of this world. The world had at last become worldly, and reason, on a new plane, became its instrument.

In western Europe powerful, absolute states had arisen—France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, England—which linked the medieval economic regions together into bigger economic units. A *bourgeoisie*, in the modern sense, arose, supporting those who wielded power in the State in this process, in order to find protection against the arbitrary action of medieval landlords. But the change did not stop here. The increase in the political power of the princes brought with it a greater concentration of wealth in their hands and replaced the bands of feudal retainers with mercenary armies; in conformity with this, medieval decentralization gave place to a paid professional civil service, and money payments replaced payments in kind in the army, administration, taxation system, and State credit. *Pecunia nervus rei publicae*—money is the nerve of the State, taught Bodin.

# 1. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Let us first sketch the economic situation, as it was in the principal European countries, before we study the gathering forces of social change in this century. Holland, having gained its independence from Spain, succeeded to the heritage of Hanseatic and also of the Italian trade, which had been badly damaged by the discovery of the sea route to India, and Amsterdam became the centre of European money transactions. The Bank of Amsterdam was founded in 1609, the East India Company seven years earlier, and the West India Company in 1621. The State supervised each of these companies and endowed them with important trading and administrative monopolies. The shares of these and similar companies formed the basis of dealings in futures on the stock exchanges, which were soon to experience their first excesses in the famous tulip speculations. In industry 'manufactories' gave rise to new forms of production and a new organization of labour; factories were erected in which many workers were collected together in one room under supervision. Holland, or rather the United Provinces, became at this time the freest country in Europe. Its powerful *bourgeoisie* would not tolerate the narrow-minded religious prejudices which so seriously hampered the economic and political progress of other countries. The Huguenot refugees, who had to flee from France owing to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, found a welcome reception there, and devoted themselves with great earnestness to the opportunities of their new social emancipation. Pierre Baille of Languedoc, for example, erected in 1682 a weaving mill with 110 looms in Amsterdam. Dutch agriculture was at that time also in a flourishing condition, for the rich towns provided a good market. But a closer analysis of Dutch economic life shows its decidedly traditionalist character. The new economic forms were developed organically from the old medieval economic units. The numerous canals, as Huizinga has shown, favoured a certain democratic and at the same time traditionalist social structure: 'Here the most insignificant peasant or fisherman could travel in his own boat as fast as a great lord, and it was difficult

to bar his passage because there were always so many ways of reaching the same point. In the whole history and culture of Holland the rider, the man on horseback, the squire as a sociological figure, plays a far smaller role than elsewhere.'<sup>1</sup> Grotius and Spinoza were the thinkers who gave graphic expression to the spiritual foundations of the Dutch State. A deep humanitarian belief in the social and altruistic instincts in man, a vigorous repudiation of Hobbes's later doctrine that man is as a wolf to man (*homo homini lupus*), formed the background of the system of the law of nations as expounded in the *De jure belli ac pacis* which Grotius published in Paris in 1625. He was convinced that legal and moral ideas could lead states to mutual peace. Spinoza, essentially more realistic than Grotius and in a certain sense in closer agreement with Hobbes, wrote in his *Theological-Political Treatise*: 'The veritable aim of the State is freedom,' or later in his *Political Treatise*: 'The aim of the State is none other than peace and security of life. Consequently that State is best where men live their lives in harmony and whose laws are respected.' The social and historical situation of Holland could alone allow such doctrines to thrive and to be transmitted to subsequent generations.

In a series of violent conflicts England was victorious over her sister Protestant nation, and when the accession of William of Orange to the English throne, which concluded the 'glorious revolution' of 1689, put an end to the war between England and Holland, Holland retreated from the ranks of the great powers and became what she has remained to the present day, a well-to-do *rentier* country, which administers its oversea possessions with prudence.

The forces of social change characteristic of the seventeenth century found their classic expression in England. The absolute powers of the throne, which had been won in alliance with the early capitalist *haute bourgeoisie*, were now challenged by their former ally. (Naturally the term 'early capitalist *haute bourgeoisie*' is not a simple sociological concept; it includes the great land-owning gentry, which in England became increasingly closely associated with capitalist interests from the fifteenth century or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his *Holländische Kultur des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Jena 1933.

earlier.) Professor Laski has given a masterly description of these classic forces of English social change in his recently published book *The Rise of European Liberalism*: 'The Revolution of 1688 was only the completion of the objects aimed at in the middle-class rebellion which Cromwell headed against the attempted Stuart despotism. Habeas Corpus, triennial Parliaments to be dominated by political parties one of which will be the constant ally of the commercial interest, religious freedom within wide limits, the abolition of Government control of the press, a judiciary independent of the executive power in the performance of its legal function, finance and the army in the control of an elected legislature—with these achievements the English merchant may sleep comfortably in his bed. . . . There was a period under Cromwell when that revolution seemed likely to travel much further than its authors desired. They sought a limited monarchy; they achieved it, but only after a brief experiment with republicanism. By achieving it, they built the solution they effected upon the basis of an alliance between the aristocracy and the middle class. The landowner and the man of commerce went into partnership at the Revolution to exploit possibilities in which the interest of both urban worker and landless peasant were only indirectly involved. After 1688 there is no threat in England from the middle class to the fundamental lines of the compromise then effected. The civil war . . . was won for the middle class by an army of apprentices, workmen, and peasants who developed, during its course, radical ideas whose daring seems more suited to the nineteenth than to the seventeenth century. We must not miss the significance of the social revolution which failed in the Puritan Rebellion. The Levellers and the agrarian communists of that day . . . intimate the emergence of a proletarian ideology. They make it clear that the victory which was achieved was not their victory. They emphasize the fact that the constitutional liberties which were conquered may have suited a class of property-owners but failed to fulfil the dreams of those who had nothing but their labour-power by which to live. . . . From the accession of James I until the outbreak of the Civil War, its main theme is the limits of monarchical power. A peaceful compromise between



opposing views proved impossible. From 1642 until 1660 we therefore watch a revolutionary struggle in which the royalist cause is beaten in the field. But, as always in a revolution, issues were raised in its continuance far different from those intended by its makers; for whereas the Parliamentarians fought the Crown in order to establish the legislature as the effective centre of law-making power, the sufferings of the army, its sense of the high mission it had accomplished, led many of its members to seek the transformation of a political into a social revolution. The dissidents failed. . . . The Restoration which followed on the death of Cromwell only supplied a traditional penumbra to the new foundations his victories had built. Henceforth, it is recognized that political power is a trust the purposes of which shall be defined by Parliament. James II sought to evade that conclusion. The result was the "glorious revolution" of 1688 which defined the Cromwellian compromise in precise terms. The philosopher of the revolution was Locke; and his theories defined the essential outlines of Liberal doctrine for nearly two centuries.' <sup>1</sup> We shall enter later in greater detail into the significance of Locke for seventeenth-century jurisprudence. The course of events in England acted *as an example*, and had a profound influence on Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau and the French Revolution: it imparted vital energy to a new stage of European development.

English economic policy in this period found its most obvious expression in Cromwell's Navigation Acts of the year 1651. England's imports from other continents, as well as her coasting trade and fisheries, were confined by law to English ships. Imports from European countries might only be carried in ships of the country of origin or in English ones. Exports to overseas areas were confined to English ships and exports to continental countries to ships of the country of destination or to English ones. This law resulted in a rapid expansion of the English fleet, although at first it placed heavy burdens on English consumers and English trade. An equally drastic measure was the passing of the English Corn Law of 1689, which provided for the stimulation of domestic production and for State influence on prices. In years of good harvest and low prices the grain trade

<sup>1</sup> London 1936, pp. 102 ff.

was given an export premium; in this way it was intended to encourage the cultivation of grain so that the English consumer would have an adequate supply even in times of bad harvests. In 1694 the Bank of England was founded, with the power to incur debts to the extent of its loans to the State.

In the same period France, under the leadership of Colbert, had become the leading European industrial country. The economic system of this period—called Colbertism or Mercantilism—not unjustly bears this name. Colbert was comptroller-general of the French Treasury from 1667 to 1683. He alone freed France from her heavy burden of debt and provided Louis XIV with the financial means for his policy of aggrandisement. Colbert stimulated cultivation through the lightening of taxation and the removal of numerous feudal privileges. But his chief concern was trade and industry. Communications, which for the most part led only to the towns, were now to be extended throughout the country. Thus Colbert constructed roads and canals. Although he did not succeed in achieving customs unification in France, he was nevertheless able to introduce legal uniformity in 1673. French trade was supported by direct premiums and partly through differential taxation of foreigners. But in vain did the growing *tiers état* endeavour to abolish monopolies, privileges, and the compulsory membership of guilds—demands won by 1649 in England. Colbert endeavoured in vain to restrict the number of State offices, and his successors actually created a large number of new posts. This purely financial measure produced in effect a heavy burden on the State; the Papal See had already introduced such a measure in the fourteenth century.

With the revocation of the Toleration Edict of Nantes in 1685 a large number of economically very capable men quitted French territory. As refugees they promoted the industry of Holland, England, and Brandenburg—to the detriment of France. Thus, in spite of his gifted finance minister, the Sun King, on his death, left France just as exhausted and burdened with debt as she was at the beginning of his reign. That ostentatious monarch, dreaming perpetually of dynastic expansion, squandered the material strength of his country.

It is not therefore surprising that in the last years of the reign

of Louis XIV critics became increasingly numerous. Professor Laski very correctly estimates this situation: 'But nothing . . . shows so plainly the degree to which capitalism had made its way in France despite all superficial differences, on lines parallel to those of England and Holland, as the character of the criticism encountered by Louis XIV in the last twenty years of his reign. It comes from the most varied sources. A great military engineer like Vauban, a great ecclesiastic like Fénelon, combine with administrators like Boisguillebert and Boulainvilliers to emphasize their view that despotic Government and imperialist adventure are ruining the resources of the kingdom. . . . They want some form of constitutional government and an end of religious persecution. They recognize that material well-being is incompatible with arbitrary authority. . . . A rational fiscal system, security of property, a means of expressing grievance for those who have substance to contribute to the national wealth, a hint, at least, of freedom of trade, these are their demands. They were, it is notable, all of them demands that the English people had finally translated into achievement in the same period. . . . The critics are done with Richelieu's *raison d'État*, they are done also with Bossuet's defence of divine right. By 1700 the foundations of the omniscient State have been decisively undermined.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us now cast a brief glance at seventeenth-century Germany. In contrast to the great absolute powers of western Europe Germany was divided into numerous dynastic territories, all seriously weakened by the Thirty Years War. Germany could not speedily recover from the effects of this war, and only the bigger eastern states, such as Prussia and Austria, could pursue an economic policy in some degree of harmony with the economic spirit of the age.

The economic principle of the epoch may now be more generally formulated, for it does not belong to the past, but, as Beckerath has already noted, has come to life again in a peculiar way in the meticulous State regulations of the Fascist economic system. The Viennese economist and sociologist, Othmar Spann, has aptly described this mercantilist economic principle in the follow-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 100 ff.

ing words: 'The creation of a favourable balance of trade was the highest aim of mercantilist endeavours. In order to achieve this, however, foreign trade . . . had to be promoted, for in this way alone could money be obtained from abroad. With this aim in view, the export industries, then called "manufactories," had to be stimulated and imports of commodities restricted as much as possible. Both these steps assumed the fostering of domestic industrial activity. This in its turn required a special commercial policy aimed at removing or reducing old barriers which town economy and guild restrictions had created. . . . The construction of roads and canals provided larger domestic markets and promoted domestic trade so as to facilitate all kinds of economic intercourse at home. Of special importance was the mercantilist customs policy—removal of export duties and, when necessary, the stimulation of exports by export premiums, restriction of imports by high import duties or prohibition. . . . Corresponding to these import restrictions there was free import of raw materials used by the export industries and prohibition of the export of the raw materials of domestic industry. Further elimination of natural economy occurred through the promotion of manufactories by means of privileges and monopolies which released them from the obligation to join a guild, preferential treatment (freedom from taxation, subsidies, etc.), the establishment of State factories, the attraction of experienced foreigners, and the purchase of manufacturing secrets. On the other hand, however, a high standard of workmanship was to be maintained in manufactories through the supervision of all production by the authorities according to precise regulations, down to the details of tools and of processes, and the consumer was to be protected by supervision of sales. . . . A further aspect of mercantilist policy was the foundation of colonies and trading companies. . . . Moreover, cheap labour was to be ensured for extending large-scale industry (stimulating an increase in the population and keeping down the prices of provisions). Finally, the production of precious metals was to be increased directly by assisting domestic gold and silver mining. The attraction of rich foreigners, and the rigid prohibition of the export of precious metals . . . were to complete and secure the network of measures for increasing

the wealth of the nation.’<sup>1</sup> Colbert, the creator of this ingenious economic system, summarizing one of the most important principles of mercantilism, wrote: ‘If money is in the country, then the desire for gain which is common to all men leads to its circulation, and in this circulation of money the royal Treasury has its share.’

But just as the omniscient State was undermined by the growing strength of the capitalist class at the end of the seventeenth century, so the economic system of absolutism found its first critics in Vauban and Boisguillebert. Boisguillebert, whom Engels later called the first descriptive political economist, saw clearly that it is not money that produces wealth. It is only a means of facilitating the exchange of commodities. ‘... l’argent,’ he wrote in 1697, ‘n’est que le moyen et l’acheminement, au lieu que les denrées utiles à la vie sont la fin et le but, et qu’ainsi un pays peut être riche sans beaucoup d’argent, et celui qui n’a que de l’argent, très misérable, s’il ne le peut échanger que difficilement avec les mêmes denrées.’<sup>2</sup> Thereby this criticism severed the very nerve-centre of the mercantilist theory.

The law of supply and demand, whence the classical economy of the eighteenth century, convinced of a naturally increasing harmony between individuals, proceeded, was also clearly described by Boisguillebert: ‘La nature établit un égale nécessité de vendre et d’acheter dans toutes sortes de trafics, de façon que le seul désir de profit soit l’âme de tous les marchés, tant dans le vendeur que dans l’acheteur; et c’est à l’aide de cet équilibre ou de cette balance que l’un et l’autre sont également forcés d’entendre raison et de s’y soumettre.’<sup>3</sup> Only freedom of trade can ensure the greatest productivity of the earth and of human labour. Just as nature keeps water pure by a constant motion of vaporization and condensation, so economic production inevitably reaches its highest intensity by analogous phenomena. Boisguillebert maintained, summarizing his belief in progress and harmony at the end of the seventeenth century: ‘Il faut se convaincre de ce

<sup>1</sup> *Die Haupttheorien der Volkswirtschaftslehre*, Leipzig 1925, pp. 5 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Détail de la France*, ed. Daire, Paris 1843, Deuxième Partie, Chap. XVIII, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from H. Sée, *Les Idées politiques en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1923, p. 333.

principe que, ni l'autorité, ni la faveur ne dispensent personne d'obéir aux lois de la justice et de la raison.'<sup>1</sup> A new epoch arose, whose political theory was to be formulated, as we shall see, in its classic purity in England by Locke. With Locke, following Ockham, Bodin, and Hooker, the rights of individuals were set above the State. Modern *bourgeois* society appeared on the stage of history.

## 2. THE ABSOLUTE STATE

The economic system of the seventeenth century corresponded to the omniscience of the absolutist State, which was shaped into a united theoretical and practical whole in the hands of Cardinal Richelieu. When Richelieu came to power in 1624 his first concern was with the restoration of political order against the rebellious higher nobility of the kingdom and against the Protestants. Richelieu ruled with an iron hand. It was he who welded modern France and created the markedly centralized French monarchy. In his *Political Testament* he formulated the tasks to which he had devoted himself: 'Je lui promis d'abord [à Votre Majesté] d'employer toute mon industrie et toute l'autorité qu'il lui plaisait de me donner pour ruiner le parti huguenot, rabaisser l'orgueil des grands, réduire tous ses sujets en leur devoir et relever son nom dans les nations étrangères au point où il devait être.'<sup>2</sup> At the same time Richelieu did not think of the royal power as a personal regime; for him it was the power of the State itself. Neither Church, nor Parliament, nor judiciary should be allowed to limit this power.

The core of the political practice and theory of Richelieu is his conception of the reason of State. As soon as questions concerning the State arose, otherwise customary ideas of justice should be left out of account. Although in private affairs evidence and proof is required at law it is different with affairs of State: '... souvent les conjectures doivent tenir lieu de preuves, veu que les grands desseins et notables entreprises ne

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertation sur la nature des richesses*, ed. Daire, Paris 1843, Chap. VI.

<sup>2</sup> *Testament politique*, Amsterdam 1719, vol. i, p. 8 f.

se vérifient jamais que par le succès ou événement d'icelles qui ne reçoit plus de remède.' In such cases, the cardinal declared cynically, one must begin with the execution and dispense with the production of witnesses and evidence. It should be added that he was fully aware that this medicine can on'y be administered by great minds; for mediocre ones it but paves the way to tyranny. In the formulation of his *Political Testament* these ideas are expressed as follows: 'Ces maximes semblent dangereuses, et, en effet, elles ne sont pas entièrement exemptes de péril; mais elles se trouveront très certainement telles, si, ne se servant pas des derniers et extrêmes remèdes aux maux qui ne se vérifieront que par conjectures, l'on en arrête seulement le cours par des moyens innocents, comme l'éloignement ou la prison des personnes soupçonnées. La bonne conscience et la pénétration d'un esprit judicieux qui, sçavant au cours des affaires, connaît presque aussi certainement le futur que le présent; que le jugement médiocre par la vue des choses mêmes garantira cette pratique de mauvaise suite; et, au pis aller, l'abus qu'on y peut commettre n'étant dangereux que pour les particuliers, à la vie desquels on ne touche point par telle voie, elle ne laisse pas d'être recevable, vu que leur intérêt n'est pas comparable à celui du public. Cependant il faut, en de telles occasions, être fort retenu pour n'ouvrir pas, par ce moyen, une porte à la tyrannie. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

Richelieu was an aristocrat. The social hierarchy was not to be interfered with in favour, say, of the third estate. In the cynical clarity of the following passage (again taken from the *Political Testament*) one feels still very far from the French Revolution: 'Tous les politiques sont d'accord que, si les peuples étaient trop à leur aise, il serait impossible de les contenir dans les règles de leur devoir. Leur fondement est qu'ayant moins de connaissance que les autres ordres de l'État, beaucoup plus cultivés ou plus instruits, s'ils n'étaient retenus par quelque nécessité, difficilement demeureraient-ils dans les règles qui leur sont prescrites par la raison et par les lois. . . . S'ils étaient libres de tributs, ils penseraient l'être de l'obéissance. Il les faut comparer aux mulets, qui, étant accoutumés à la charge, se gâtent par un long repos plus que par le travail. . . .'<sup>2</sup> Never has the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. vol. ii, p. 30 f.<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. i, p. 185 f.

conscious will to dominance of the absolute State been expressed with such nonchalance and so little attempt to conceal its true nature.

### 3. THE NEW RATIONALISM OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The rational orientation towards the things of this world characteristic of early capitalist political and economic leadership was equally present in the science and philosophy of the epoch. Philosophy and science united to work out a 'natural' conception of the world with the instrument of reason, as Dilthey has shown in his penetrating studies of the history of seventeenth-century thought. In fact, the history of philosophy characterizes the seventeenth century as the epoch of the great rationalist systems. There is a straight road leading from Leonardo da Vinci, Kepler, and Galileo to Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, and Leibniz. Philosophical empiricism appeared only at the end of the century, with Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, which was published in 1690. If we are not mistaken, the process of secularization which we have traced out from the dissolution of the medieval world, reached its conclusion not in the rationalistic systems of Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, and Leibniz, despite the apparently water-tight logic of these philosophies—not even in the most worldly and certainly the most cynical of these thinkers, Thomas Hobbes, who wrote in his *Leviathan*, which has unjustly earned for him the name of atheist: 'And did not his [God's] will assure the *necessity* of man's will, and consequently of all that on man's will dependeth, the *liberty* of men would be a contradiction, and impeding to the omnipotence and *liberty* of God,'<sup>1</sup> but in Locke's empiricism, wherein for the first time the *bourgeois* motive of recent centuries receives clear expression, even though its germ was, as we shall see, present in Hobbes.

Descartes and Leibniz were as fertile exponents of the exact sciences as of a philosophy directed towards universalism. The exact sciences—astronomy, mathematics, physics, etc.—played a decisive part in the development of the seventeenth-century conception of the natural world. The reasons which led to the great

<sup>1</sup> Everyman ed., p. 111.



advance of the new natural sciences are of major importance for our inquiry. We have already (cf. Chapter III) seen that the continuity of mathematical-physical research reaches back far into the Middle Ages. Descartes's analytical geometry and Galileo's 'discoveries' were already known at an early date in the Paris Sorbonne. But then it was arm-chair knowledge in the truest sense of the word. It was theory, in the sense of speculation divorced from reality. The order, of which all things formed a part, remained fixed and prescribed from the very beginning in the great order of God, Almighty Creator of all creatures and things. The whole of nature was still regarded as full of mystical powers until the new natural science of Kepler and Galileo began to break away from the framework of the Renaissance philosophy of nature. It was Galileo who wrote the words: 'The book of philosophy is that of nature, which is constantly before our eyes, but which only a few are able to decipher and read, as it is composed and written in letters which are different from those of our alphabet, in triangles and squares, in circles and spheres, in cones and pyramids.' The model for this new exactness was the rigid deductive proof of Euclidean geometry. We find this geometrical method in Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes; even moral phenomena and the theory of social relationships are treated *more geometrico*. Leonardo da Vinci already envisaged nature as proceeding from the simple to the complex, whilst thought has to begin with complex phenomena and resolve them analytically into their component parts. Kepler proceeded according to this method in the discovery of the laws of the planets, as did Galileo's analytical method. Functional numerical relationships replace the vague analogies of the divine *ordo*. Consideration of Leonardo da Vinci's plans for fortifications (in whose case we are now able to trace the new attitude to the world very precisely, thanks to the penetrating researches of Pierre Duhem) directs attention to the *material* basis of this new natural science: practice, the advance in productive powers, revolutionize the relations of production. The origin of modern natural science is, alongside its theoretical roots in the tradition of science, eminently *practical*.

It is not within the scope of this book, which only aims at

working out the basic principles of the seventeenth century, to enter into a full study of the rich body of ideas that belong to that period. 'Only from the forties onwards,' writes Dilthey, 'did that growth in the knowledge of nature occur in the course of which the natural system of the moral world became incorporated in a comprehensive system of knowledge of nature.' Perhaps nowhere can this process be followed more revealingly than in Descartes's *Discours de la Méthode*, which appeared in 1637. Here a sovereign spirit facing the world with an open mind summarizes the sublime pathos of the age. In the first part of the essay, which is written in classical French, Descartes relates the history of his own education: how he began to doubt the traditional scholastic knowledge, and to doubt it 'methodically,' and how, dissatisfied with the confusion of public affairs, he found his way back to a study of himself and thus won a new point of view in the understanding of the world: *cogito, ergo sum*. It is a far cry from the Middle Ages of St Augustine to the proud, self-conscious, and confident personality of the modern thinker, and once again we may recall the quotation from St Augustine in Petrarch's moving letter.<sup>1</sup> With Descartes the thinker ceases to turn from the world, as does St Augustine, because it threatens to overwhelm him in sin, and modern man, sure of his own personality, returns to his ego, knowing himself to be powerful and the rational creator of this world. The unbroken will of the early capitalist ruling class, with its faith in the future and in reason, finds expression here.

Successful as mathematician and natural scientist—his writings on analytical geometry and optics prove this—Descartes sought also to incorporate the moral cosmos in his constructive system, in a work entitled *Les Passions de l'âme*. But here, as later in Hobbes and Spinoza, although these deal in much greater detail with problems of the State and of social life, it is clear how this epoch isolates the individual, how he is, as an individual, atomized and *constructively* related to society and the State. On the frontispiece engraving of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which appeared in 1651, the almighty State is portrayed as a composite figure built up of a multitude of individual men.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IV.

According to the seventeenth-century conception the individual antedates society. This is the insurmountable limitation of the age of absolutism. Nevertheless the social life of the French court surrounding the figure of Louis XIV afforded a concrete opportunity of studying and understanding the social behaviour of the individual. In the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, in the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon, in the great work of Pascal, there is evidently a common endeavour to formulate general, eternal laws of human nature. The seventeenth century is constructively-systematically, and not historically, orientated. Although in the circles of the learned Maurists the foundations of exact historical research were worked out, the emphasis of the scientific and philosophical work of the seventeenth century lies entirely on the creation of an exact generalized science and conception of life. It was left to the eighteenth century to develop an historical view of the world.

Before turning to the political and social theory of the seventeenth century, however, a profound difference between the French psychology of an intimate understanding of life and the doctrine of emotions as taught by Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes requires special consideration. The doctrine of emotions arose from similar constructive basic principles in each of these three great rationalists. Hobbes traced a coherent connection that linked the movements of the senses, the instincts, and the passions up to the facts of consciousness: the man who sought to control the world must be able to control his own passions, and only a decision based on reason could guarantee order in society and the State. If we compare this constructive doctrine of emotions, which distorts moral phenomena to a great extent, with the psychology of the great French moralists, we find in the latter a depth of analysis of the nature of man which is part of the lasting European achievements, and to which all later important analysts of human nature return: the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, is unimaginable without the French moralists. These thinkers showed man as an active living creature undergoing unceasing and often imperceptible change. Here are a few examples from the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, who in many respects resembles Hobbes.

'L'intérêt parle toutes sortes de langues et joue toutes sortes de personnages, même celui de désintéressé. Nous n'avons pas assez de force pour suivre toute notre raison. Nous avons plus de force que de volonté; et c'est souvent pour nous excuser à nous-mêmes que nous nous imaginons que les choses sont impossibles.'

'La philosophie triomphe aisément des maux passés et de ceux qui ne sont pas près d'arriver, mais les maux présents triomphent d'elle. La durée de nos passions ne dépend pas plus de nous que la durée de notre vie.'

'Il y a dans le cœur humain une génération perpétuelle de passions; en sorte que la ruine de l'une est presque toujours l'établissement d'une autre.'

'Les passions en engendrent souvent qui leur sont contraires: l'avarice produit quelquefois la libéralité et la libéralité l'avarice; on est souvent ferme par faiblesse, et audacieux par timidité.'

'Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement.'<sup>1</sup>

It is instructive to compare these *Maximes* with Spinoza's doctrine of emotions in Part III of his *Ethics*,<sup>2</sup> and with Hobbes's exposition of the passions in Chapter VI of *Leviathan*.<sup>3</sup>

La Rochefoucauld published the first edition of the *Maximes* in 1665; three years later came the second Latin edition of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, containing his theory of man in its most developed form. A few years later, in 1670, Blaise Pascal's *Pensées* were posthumously published, and in these the seventeenth-century understanding of life possibly finds its deepest expression. The peculiar tension between the philosophical-constructive moral doctrine of the epoch and the aphoristic form of the doctrine of the great French moralists is probably the beginning of the modern separation of the two spheres of science and direct understanding of life, a separation which present-day philosophy is at last endeavouring to bridge. It is therefore no accident that Pascal is exercising a new influence to-day.

The French moral understanding of life penetrates deeper than the great rationalist systems. This was already clear in the

<sup>1</sup> La Rochefoucauld, *Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales*, introd. Sainte-Beuve, Classiques Garnier, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Everyman ed., pp. 83 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Everyman ed., pp. 23 ff.

thought of Montaigne. Morals and philosophy had been a coherent unity in the Graeco-Roman conception of the world, as also in the Middle Ages. Only in the modern world had human knowledge and human life become separated, though indeed this process was not recognized when it was taking place.

The importance of Pascal's views is enhanced through his being one of the great natural scientists of the period. He provided the European on his historical quest with a fundamental truth which can never be lost: 'L'esprit a son ordre, qui est par principes et démonstrations; le cœur en a un autre. On ne preuve pas qu'on doit être aimé, en exposant d'ordre des causes de l'amour: cela serait ridicule.'<sup>1</sup> The philosophy of the present day is endeavouring for the first time to investigate this order of the heart, which Pascal envisaged. As a true son of his age, Pascal held *both* these spheres to be capable of investigation, without falling into the error of holding the moral order to be therefore rational. 'Je puis bien concevoir un homme sans mains, pieds, tête; car ce n'est que l'expérience qui nous apprend que la tête est plus nécessaire que les pieds: mais je ne puis concevoir l'homme sans pensée; ce serait une pierre ou une brute. C'est donc la pensée qui fait l'être de l'homme, et sans quoi on ne le peut concevoir. Qu'est-ce qui sent du plaisir en nous? Est-ce la main? est-ce le bras? est-ce la chair? est-ce la sang? On verra qu'il faut que ce soit quelque chose d'immatériel. . . . L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser: une vapeur, une goutte d'eau, suffit pour le tuer. Mais, quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt; et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien. Toute notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée, que nous ne saurions remplir. Travaillons donc à bien penser. Voilà le principe de la morale.'<sup>2</sup> It was the power of *reason* which welded the universe and man into a unity in this epoch.

<sup>1</sup> Translation, Everyman ed., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 96 f.

## 4. THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The social and political doctrine of the seventeenth century has to be shown here only in structure. The development of the English State and society became during this century the model for the Continent. The medieval economic and social system was superseded in England earlier than elsewhere. When, in the fourteenth century, the number of landworkers was greatly reduced by plague and famine, there was a change from cultivation to sheep-farming, while the maritime position and the influence of industrially highly developed Flanders favoured the growth of shipping and industry. Great landowners and wealthy families of the towns came into ever closer contact with one another. The period from the outbreak of the English Civil War to the Revolution of 1689 was the first great *bourgeois* revolution in European history.

Few English thinkers were so much influenced by the confusion of the English Civil War as Thomas Hobbes. He interrupted his work on his philosophical system in order, in his *Leviathan*, which appeared in English in 1651, to provide a dislocated contemporary world with a settled orientation for its social and political thought and action. In fact, in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the political thought of the seventeenth century found its classic expression.

In Hobbes's definition man is distinguished from the animals by reason and curiosity. In a natural state the relation of man to man is determined by the famous formula of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. But this natural state is not, in the system of Hobbes, to be understood as a historical starting-point; rather the natural state (under which he includes, for example, war between nations) may recur at any time. The struggle for power and self-seeking are the forces which motivate man in the natural state. But in so far as Hobbes distinguishes man from the animals through the possession of reason, his view is more than a merely naturalistic one. Thus in the thirteenth chapter of *Leviathan* he writes: 'Force and Fraud are in warre the two Cardinall vertues. Justice, and injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind. If they were they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his Senses, and Passions. They are Qualities,

that relate to men *in Society* [our italics], not in Solitude. . . .’ The passions, so Hobbes continues in this connection, which incline men towards peace, are fear in general, and particularly fear of a violent death (to Hobbes the greatest evil that exists); next, the desire for those things that are necessary for a comfortable life, and finally, a hope of actually obtaining these through industry. ‘And reason suggesteth convenient Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These are . . . the Lawes of Nature.’ Thus one may say that the *civilized condition* is included in Hobbes’s definition of man as a being endowed with reason.

On this basis the meaning of Hobbes’s definition of the State becomes intelligible. We give it in his own words in view of its importance: ‘The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Forraigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their owne industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one Man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgement. This is more than Consent, or Concord; it is a reall Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person, made by Covenant of every man with every man. . . . This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a *Common-Wealth*, in latine *Civitas*. This is the Generation of that great *Leviathan*, or rather . . . of that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defence.’<sup>1</sup>

Once men in society have made over their power, either to one man or to an assembly, the bearer of this power is truly sovereign. He is not bound by contract, in the sense of that later theory of social contract which weakened the doctrine of Hobbes. Hobbes

<sup>1</sup> Everyman ed., p. 89.

believed in the unlimited authority of the State, to which the Church must also be subordinated as a State Church, and he made no secret of the fact—even in the English edition of *Leviathan*—that the monarchical form of State power seemed to him the most legitimate and desirable. It is the duty of the State to guarantee internal and external peace, and to secure to the citizens freedom for individual enrichment within just and moderate limits. In addition to obedience and loyalty, Hobbes recognized industry and thrift as citizen virtues. In contrast to Locke's opinion he held that the ruler should be able to use the property of his subjects if the maintenance of the State requires; apart from this the sovereign stands for the equality of the citizens before the law, and for the rule of law. The power of the State alone can guarantee to citizens security of life and limb; it alone can preserve them from the greatest of evils—death by violence. Bravery, which is the greatest virtue in the natural state of man, is not a virtue at all in the civil State; only those responsible for the conduct of war, that is, the king and his soldiers, must be brave.

Such were the ideals of citizenship formulated by Hobbes's political philosophy. Later, in the nineteenth century, we again encounter in the Hegelian theory of the State these same ideas. There is, to be sure, a wide gulf between Hobbes and Hegel, which it may be useful to indicate here. Hobbes, true to the basic early capitalist attitude of his age, is dynamic and puts his faith in reason; he hopes (as appears in the imposing conclusion of the second part of *Leviathan*) that kings will be found to lead and mould the State of the world in accordance with his views. Hobbes looks towards the daybreak. For Hegel, on the other hand, the owl of Minerva begins its flight only after the sunset.

Hobbes constantly emphasized the *a priori* character of his political doctrine: 'The science of establishing and maintaining States has just as precise and developed rules as arithmetic and geometry; and experience is not the only guide.'<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless he limited this thesis by stating that the study of the rules of political science is more difficult than the study of geometry, because it is more subject to human passions.

Let us compare Hobbes, the great a-priorist of seventeenth-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Latin version of *Leviathan*.



century political theory, with his opponent James Harrington, author of *Oceana*, which appeared in 1656 and was incorrectly regarded by many as a Utopia. *Oceana* is rather an annotated constitution, recalling Plato's *Laws*, and having nothing in common with More's *Utopia* or Bacon's *Atlantis*.

If we ignore purely formal points of similarity we see that Harrington was no professional scholar. Although he had studied at Oxford, the energy of this precocious youth led him early to a concrete experience of actual life. From Oxford Harrington set out on extensive journeys on the Continent. Holland, Denmark, Flanders, France, and Italy provided him with a wealth of material to sharpen his perception of political and social relations. He received particularly lasting impressions from the united nation of the Netherlands, and from the political constitution of Venice. Despite his friendly relations with Charles I his fundamental political outlook was republican.

In contrast to Hobbes, Harrington employed the inductive method in political theory. Expressly referring to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, Harrington met his opponents, who rejected his empiricism, with the argument that the circulation of the blood was a medical fact before it was discovered by Harvey, who, in order to make this discovery, pursued a painstaking experimental study and abandoned the deductive method of medicine before arriving at the general formulation he ultimately reached. But the inductive method leads necessarily to the erection of principles which then guide the investigator in the selection of facts no less than the deductive method. In this methodological difference between Hobbes and Harrington may be seen that gulf between actuality and knowledge which their epoch was unable to bridge, and which similarly existed between Locke and Leibniz. When Leibniz distinguished between *vérités de fait* and *vérités de raison* or opposed to Locke's thesis that nothing was in the understanding which had not previously been in the senses, the clever dictum *nempe nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse intellectus*, this problem of the gulf between knowledge and actuality was in no way solved. It was left to late eighteenth-century philosophy to travel further on this road.

Through careful study of ancient and more recent history Harrington arrived at the formulation of his political principles. 'No man,' he wrote in *Oceana*, 'can be a politician except he be first a Historian or a Traveller.' Harrington regarded Machiavelli, Grotius, and Bacon as the principal writers on political theory in recent generations.

Harrington's political theories may be summarized in two theses. *Firstly*, the maintenance of a State depends on the possession by the ruling class of a sufficiency of land. It is probable that Harrington arrived at this view owing to the experiences of his family, who were among the numerous English landowners forced to sell land in order to maintain their customary and appropriate standard of living, and who, by this very expedient, weakened their political influence. This tendency, which requires detailed investigation, had been in process in England from the fifteenth century, or even earlier. It has not unjustly been claimed that there is a central element of the Marxian conception of history in this conception of Harrington's. The *second* thesis of Harrington claims that every healthy system of government must possess four elements: secret election, indirect election, limitation of the duration of the Government ('rotation,' as he called it), and, finally, a two-chamber system, in which the functions of advice and legislation must be separated.

Harrington's influence on the scientific theory of the State was slight. He was overshadowed by the brilliance and force of the Hobbesian doctrine. 'Nevertheless,' writes the German historian, Richard Koebner, who is well acquainted with Harrington, 'the future of State doctrine, and especially of that of the people's State, was not based solely on pure science. The problem of the written constitution . . . became of practical importance . . . in the colonial areas. In Harrington's own lifetime his ideas began to influence the New World. His influence began with the constitution of the colony of Carolina in 1667, and it was continually renewed up to the Union constitution of 1787. Meanwhile in England the rehabilitation of the principle of popular sovereignty in the revolution of 1689 restored to him a literary standing. He has become a classic

of democracy. . . .’ But even that was not the end of Harrington’s influence on succeeding generations, as Koebner proceeds to relate: ‘Harrington made a deep impression on Sieyès. The latter’s constitutional plans (almost a century and a half later) proceeded . . . from the conviction that the immanent logic of an order based on social contract could be automatically concerted into political energy through the establishment of appropriate institutions. Where in Harrington’s ideal construction the method appeared plastically, where it discovered means of giving scope through the legislature to the will and energies of the people in legislation, there Sieyès found guidance in it. . . . He returned to it on three decisive occasions: in his programmatical writing of 1788–9, in which he prescribed to the States General the direction of its activity; in his proposals for the republican constitution of 1795; and in the plans he presented to Napoleon in 1799. . . . Through him Harrington was operative in instigating, as well as in ending, the [French] Revolution.’ Thus Harrington became one of the most effective political thinkers of the seventeenth century.

The ship that brought William of Orange to England in 1689 also carried John Locke, in whose work seventeenth-century political theory reaches its conclusion. The Bill of Rights, clearly delimiting the spheres of Crown and Parliament, and putting in the hands of the latter all decisive powers: control of finance and taxation, the right to raise an army, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, and religious toleration—found its theoretical legitimization in those writings of Locke, which appeared in 1690 under the title *Two Treatises of Government*.

Let us briefly summarize Locke’s ideas. God had given the earth to man as common property. But as men are all born free and equal, He gave them at the same time private property in their persons. The work of man and its results are his property. Man has the right of self-preservation. The provisions of the earth which are free to man are not sufficient to maintain his life, and he is forced to cultivate the earth. In his manifold activities man mingles his powers of labour, which are his private property, with the earth; so that thereby cultivated ground becomes private property. None may rob man of the fruits of his labours. The

principal object of the establishment of political society is the maintenance of property. 'The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property.'<sup>1</sup> Consequently a positive law is made and independent judges and executive organs appointed. In this way man is able to protect life, freedom, and property much more effectively than he could alone. But the political association is only given as much power as the individuals in their natural freedom renounce. And its power extends no further and lasts no longer than serves the purpose of individuals.

But if the purpose of the State is primarily the protection of the property of the citizens, and if the State may be dissolved at any time, then there arises that breach in principle between the State and civil society, which in fact dominated the subsequent two hundred and fifty years of modern history, and for the restoration of which the present day is trying the most varied remedies. Locke indeed speaks of this breach with *naïveté* and unconcern; only in later thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, and the English utilitarians, is the relation between State and society—corresponding to the later stage of capitalist development—made the corner-stone of systems of political philosophy. The principle of the separation of powers must be considered as a consequence of Locke's conception of the State. In it he was, however, merely summing up the results of the Bill of Rights. Montesquieu carries the Lockean principle of the separation of powers a stage further, and so precludes the great French Revolution.

It was not the strong State of Richelieu that the closing seventeenth century bequeathed to coming generations, for Locke had already formulated the theoretical foundations for the weak State of the liberal *bourgeoisie*, which Lassalle was later to call the *Nachtwächterstaat*, meaning thereby a State which limited its functions purely to those of a policeman maintaining law and order.

<sup>1</sup> *Of Civil Government. Two Treatises*, Everyman ed., p. 180.

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CHAPTER VI  
BRITISH POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE  
EUROPEAN TRADITION

I. INTRODUCTORY

It is clearly impossible in one chapter to sketch the development of British political thought. Any attempt to do so would become either a list of names or a string of omissions, and both of these are valueless. For this reason I have decided in this essay to limit myself to the selection of two or three salient features in the political ideas of this country without any attempt systematically to expound their development. If we can comprehend a few of the peculiarities of the British mind, and find out something of their causes, we shall, at least, have discovered some of the data upon which a judgment can be formed on the contribution of Great Britain to European culture.

Perhaps the most common generalization about British statesmanship is that it hates theory and prefers 'muddling through.' It is usually made by Englishmen in a tone which blends a mixture of condescension and self-depreciation, and is usually employed to excuse the vagaries of foreign policy or the existence of some glaring anomaly. We have become proud of our reputation as practical men of affairs, but we are also uneasily aware that 'the virtue of muddling through' is not really a virtue, and does not really explain the paradoxes of our political conduct.

Only a moment's serious consideration is necessary in order to see that theory and speculative thought are by no means foreign to the British mind. In natural science and economics, to mention only two departments, Great Britain has excelled, while in the realm of philosophy British thinkers have been as influential as those of any other country. In every nation the vast majority of the population are suspicious of the thinking minority, and the politicians and business men disregard the

academics whenever they can. These are facts common to human nature at large, not peculiar to the British people.

The true peculiarity of Englishmen consists not in their disregard of theory but in the uses for which they employ it. Our thought, like our language, has a deep aversion to systematization. We have always been unwilling to base our actions upon a philosophy of life, indeed, we have no word to correspond to the German *Weltanschauung*. Theory, for us, is not the foundation upon which practice should be built, but an instrument to be employed in the achievement of given ends. The 'reasonable' man is the man who uses not *Vernunft* but *Verstand*, and it is again significant that the French *raison* and the German *Vernunft* have no equivalents in English. The Anglo-Saxon peoples have produced scientists, historians, and philosophers, but not one pre-eminent exponent of a systematic philosophy or theology. In short, our speculations are employed to destroy or to support a given belief, not to demonstrate the premises of belief itself.

In a very profound sense, then, British political thought is dialectical in character. It is always part of a controversy, and therefore it is only intelligible in the context of conflict which gave rise to it. Even our most academic theorists and our speculative thinkers have elaborated their theories to meet a given situation. We do not dislike theory as such, but we do suspect any theory which has no relation to immediate practical objectives.

This characteristic of our philosophy has its analogy in our institutions. Here, too, we can perceive a dislike for systematization as such, and a tendency to graft new adjustments on to the body politic. Just as political ideas have developed in the conflict of parties and interests, so our constitution is the result of successive adaptations of the existing structure to new emergencies. We have never undergone a reconstruction of our social system based upon clear-cut principles, and we have never experienced a revolution which was not fundamentally conservative in character. Neither Cromwell's army, nor the Whig aristocrats in 1688, tried to create a new political structure: deeply though they differed in aim, both were concerned to preserve already existing liberties, or at least to persuade them-

selves that the liberties which they were safeguarding were really parts of an ancestral tradition.

It is a matter of indifference to our argument whether these characteristics are resultants of racial traits, or of social and economic factors, or of both. In this essay it is our task not to explain but to classify the peculiarities of British political thought. Nevertheless it should be remembered that certain geographical and economic factors have been deeply influential in its development. That this country was insulated from the worst effects of European religious and dynastic struggles, that the development of its national unity was naturally conditioned by its insular position, that its resources of coal and iron gave it a long lead in industrial development, and lastly, that its position between Europe and America gave it a feeling of independence from its neighbours—these are all facts of inestimable importance in our political evolution. They have all tended to produce an easy-going inability to perceive the difficulties and the dilemmas which have faced most other countries fairly frequently in the course of their history. As a result, while ridiculing the excesses of others, we often fail to understand the foundations of our own social order. Busily engaged in argument about our immediate objectives, we leave unnoticed the premisses on which these arguments are based; whereas other countries, such as Germany, which are not so fortunately situated, have been forced to consider those premisses because they had to construct a social order instead of merely adapting it to change.

This contrast is well illustrated by the problem of nationalism and nationality. The German people found no easy ready-made solution to it. For them, in Luther's time, as to-day, state and nation were separate, even contradictory, terms. National unity had to be achieved, not within, but in spite of, political institutions. They were faced by the questions: What is the German people? What parts of that people shall be included in the German national State? Which (if any) Germany dynasty shall wear the imperial crown? How can national frontiers be reconciled with strategic and economic needs? Thus throughout German history the practical problems of everyday statesmanship necessitated a consideration of the fundamental postulates of the



nation-state. There is no necessity to assume that the Germans are racially or hereditarily more profound thinkers than we. Man seldom thinks unless he has to: his most abstract chains of speculation originate usually in some immediate practical need. The fact that, ever since the break-up of the feudal system, Germans have been compelled to solve for themselves problems solved for us by geography is sufficient to account for the difference. But to account for it is not to remove it, and the difference, once made, has influenced the language, the institutions, and the ethics of both nations.

A similar conclusion will be reached by a comparison of France and England. Here, however, it is the problem of internal and not external freedom which we must examine. The foundations of a political order, which secured freedom for a privileged class, had been laid in this country by the Glorious Revolution; and a system of representative institutions had come into existence one hundred years before the period of economic revolution which was to open the way for democracy. The ideas of personal freedom and political responsibility had time to develop in England before they were fully actualized in democratic government. The privileged aristocracy, even in the hey-day of Tory reaction, neither held undisputed power, nor were they, as in France, the useless appendages of a centralized bureaucracy. They were not a ruling caste, but a responsible ruling class, which had not only evolved the system of cabinet government to replace the royal executive, thereby avoiding the perils of autocratic centralism, but was also willing to open its ranks to any individual members of the *nouveaux riches* who would accept its traditions.

The Industrial Revolution, therefore, found a political system elastic enough to adapt itself to the new conditions. Capitalism could develop within it and modify its detail without any violent change; and, more important still, the middle classes, instead of ousting the landed aristocracy from power, learnt from it the traditions of responsibility and social conservatism which were to soften the cruelty of class struggle. Indeed we may go further. As Halévy has shown so brilliantly, the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain should not be considered as a sudden

and devastating break with tradition occurring at the end of the eighteenth century, but as a slow process of transformation begun in the fifteenth century and still unfinished to-day. The economic structure of British society was wellnigh complete before the inventions occurred which were to revolutionize the technique of production, and for this reason their political effects were not so disturbing. From the fourteenth century on, the landed interests mixed with the commercial interests of the cities, and the emancipation of the middle classes was accelerated, not begun, by the introduction of machinery and of the factory system. Everywhere in our history we find this softening of the effects of change, which is therefore so gradual and so gentle that it is difficult to analyse it into periods without distorting it.

How striking the contrast is when we turn to eighteenth-century France, and find an ossified political system, within which the landed aristocracy held no responsible position! The economic problems of the country could easily have been rectified and there were men at the disposal of the Government competent to carry through the necessary reforms. The French Revolution occurred, not only because of the overwhelming pressure of economic hardship, but because the middle classes could feel no loyalty to an autocracy which denied them the share in government which their self-respect demanded. It was, in fact, a democratic revolution: the French *bourgeoisie*, unlike the English, at the end of the eighteenth century had to use that right of revolution which Locke had praised, and so democracy came not by a peaceful extension of privilege but by the destruction of a system of government. Here again we observe that political theory is the product of conflict and its instrument too. In the fifty years before the Revolution, France had been forced by the logic of fact to consider the theory of popular sovereignty. Faced by a sovereign monarch, the people made the claim, not to abolish absolute sovereignty as Locke had wished, but to assert its own sovereign power, as the Americans had done. Thus the theory of democracy was evolved both in France and America as the instrument for the attack on irresponsible power. No other idea had the dynamic power to create a revolutionary spirit and to overthrow a system. In the hands of Rousseau and Tom Paine,

Locke's cool and reasonable defence of natural rights against the encroachments of James II became a flaming sword to destroy all limitations of the popular will. In short, democratic theory was needed in France to achieve freedom, in Great Britain it was not.

Yet a third illustration of this contrast may be found in the relations of Church and State. In almost every country in the world, the Reformation brought a conflict between Church and State which was the cause of merciless religious wars. Scarcely a people in the world avoided that fundamental dilemma which the competing loyalties of the spiritual and temporal power, of ecumenical Rome and national monarchy occasioned. And this dilemma forced every thinking person to ask himself the questions: What are the rights of the State? Is it the supreme lord and protector of morality? Or is there set against it another institution more holy though less powerful than it? England by a miracle avoided this sharp dilemma. A monarch, claiming divine right, instituted a national church which was neither Protestant nor Catholic, but a blend of both. The whole people was united by a rising tide of nationalism in throwing off the yoke of Rome. They would be divided upon the questions of divine right, the character of the national Church, and the right of dissent. They would persecute and pillage and finally fight out a civil war. But all these conflicts would take place upon the basis of national unity: they would be problems posed to the individual in his relations to the nation-state, never problems which endangered the existence of the nation-state itself.

Our case can be rounded off by a consideration of the fourth great problem of modern political theory. We have seen that the concepts of national unity, political responsibility, and religious freedom were never evolved by Englishmen in their complete revolutionary logic, because there was no need to do so. It remains only to indicate that the problem of economic freedom has been blurred in a similar way. British socialism has never become a systematic body of doctrine based on a scientific analysis of the economic structure; and the British Labour movement has at no period in its history, with the possible exception of Chartism, been a class party determined to mono-

polize for itself the privileges of power. The elasticity of the social system, the rising standard of living which characterized the last half of the nineteenth century, and, above all, the fact that the co-operative and trade union organizations preceded and conditioned the nature of the political movement—all these factors have prevented the growth in the British mind of any clear-cut theory of economic justice or of economic freedom. Just as the British capitalist found himself evolving a system of monopoly and of imperialism without fully understanding what he was about, so the Labour movement at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century built up its organization unaware of the laws of its development, uncertain of its philosophy, and attentive only to the immediate ends in view. It never experienced the martyrdom of Bismarckian persecution, and for this reason never felt in its political actuality the full force of the class war. Inspired largely by the social ideals of nonconformity, it could hardly believe that religion was the opium of the people; and, drawing profit, at least in part, from the prosperity of the export trade and from the social services which the foreign investments of a prosperous *rentier* class could comfortably afford, it could not easily believe in the law of increasing misery which continental scientists conscientiously demonstrated. Thus it inevitably conceived its role as an actor upon the traditional and firmly constructed stage of national politics. That role increased in importance with the post-War decline of the Liberal party until Labour became the official Opposition which might even play the part of the Government at times. But British Labour, try as it might, could never seriously believe that parliamentary institutions were a 'super-structure' (the executive committee of the ruling class) which it must first destroy before it erected a brand-new stage precisely suited to its own performance. No! Parliament and local government were its stage; and upon that stage, in collaboration with other parties—and with the monarchy as well—it has been fully satisfied to work out the drama of democratic evolutionary legislation.

## 2. HOBBS AND LOCKE

Clearly it is somewhat unreasonable for us to claim a greater measure of common sense than our neighbours, or to suggest that 'muddling through' is a peculiar characteristic of the British mind. We are neither more practical than the rest of the world, nor less speculative; but we have been faced by political problems whose solution did not demand speculation. We can no longer pretend, as I suggested at the beginning of this essay, that we, unlike others, are specially devoted to immediate objectives, but we must see that our immediate objectives, unlike those of others, did not usually necessitate drastic reconstruction. For clear-cut theory and profound speculation are not the result of academic tranquillity and cloistered ease: on the contrary, tranquillity produces a mood of easy-going moralizing. Urgent and deeply practical necessity is the soil in which philosophic systems, which are always either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, are grown. Plato, Calvin, Hegel, Marx were not philosophers of peace, but thinkers who realized that drastic discipline, and with it rigorous theory, were necessary to heal the wounds of a stricken society. Such rigour and such discipline are alien to the British mind, not because British common sense disowned them, but because British good fortune did not feel the necessity for them.

How true this is may be seen by a consideration of the one truly systematic political philosopher whom England has produced. Thomas Hobbes is the exception which proves our rule. The *Leviathan* was the monstrous creature of a mind fearful of civil war. Strangely remote from considerations of immediate policy, it offended all parties and pleased none. Hobbes, unlike most of his successors, was faced by a profound dilemma. The new nation-state, thrown up by the convulsions of the Reformation, had been inspired by conflicting motives. In the first place, the old world order in which the local temporal power was sanctified by a Universal Church had been shattered. The wishes of an individual monarch and the will of a people had flouted ecumenical authority, and, with the doctrine of the divine right of kings, had established sovereignty within the nation. This

change involved the centralization of power, both in the temporal and in the spiritual sphere. The will of the Tudor monarch could now be limited by no external force, and would permit no rival within the State itself. But with the breaking of all its external and spiritual chains, the new sovereign had unloosed a new spirit soon to limit his despotic authority. The shattering of the Catholic dogma produced a spirit of individualism in diametrical opposition to 'divine right.' Once the Bible had become the fountain-head of truth, the right of individual interpretation was bound to be claimed by the religious conscience. If a Tudor quoted scripture, so could the meanest of his subjects, and the new Anglican Church found itself between the devil of Rome and the deep sea of nonconformity. Out of these conflicts sprang the claim to *religious freedom* which was to become one of the motive forces of British Liberalism during the next four hundred years.

Closely connected with this liberation of the individual conscience there rises a new movement of scientific thought. Not only conscience, but reason, had been freed and began to claim undisputed sway over the policies of men. This movement turns not to the Bible but to the classics as its authority. Aristotle, previously formalized into the theology of Aquinas, becomes a new revolutionary force. The Elizabethan, despising the barbaric mysteries of Gothic architecture, adopts the rational, clear-cut lines of Greece and Rome. The Reformation coincides with the Renaissance, and the new theology allies itself with the new rationalism in its attack on the old feudal order.

This is an epoch of ruthless individual self-assertion; it is therefore a violent epoch, in which the excesses of self-willed monarchs are equalled by the turbulence of their subjects. The divine right of kings ferociously asserts its authority over those two other divine rights of conscience and of reason. But the more the monarch manifests his own individual will and reason, the more his subjects perceive that they too, no less than he, are equipped with similar faculties. And all the time these three new forces are united in their determination (unsuccessful, as it happens) to eradicate every vestige of the old medieval world system. Out of this tumult a new social order is forged and a

new economic basis of society is painfully constructed. But here, too, *Mercantilism* is based on a fundamental contradiction. The landholder, enriched by the spoliation of the monasteries, looks for fresh fields of capital exploitation and sometimes finds them in the new worlds discovered by the explorers: and the new order blesses economic individualism and private enterprise, protecting them with a paternal system of State control. But already there is latent a conflict between the interests of a prosperous privileged class of landowners and merchants and the interests of a sovereign monarch asserting manfully the divine right of kings. Who shall delimit the *rights of property* over against the rights of the sovereign power?

The divine right of kings and the rights of conscience, reason, and property: these are the four conflicting motives out of which the nation-state was born. How to reconcile them within a stable social order was the problem facing Thomas Hobbes, who lived through the convulsions of the Civil War and the Protectorate, only to see a Stuart once more upon the throne.

The *Leviathan* is an un-English book because its author really grapples with the deepest problems of the State. It is un-English also in that it gives a solution as ingenious as it is absurd. Determined to retain absolute sovereignty, Hobbes strips it of that divine right which is its only justification; determined at all costs to provide security for the individual, he removes the right of revolution by which security alone can be achieved. Basing his whole argument on a cool application of scientific reason, he denies to reason that freedom which is vital to its life. Bitterly critical of the pretensions of individual conscience, he finds the justification of sovereignty in a contract whose binding force conscience alone can feel. The four motives are stretched upon a Procrustean bed which cracks the joints of every one of them. For it analyses not the rights of the established sovereign, but the reasons which lead the individual with property and privilege to accept dictatorship: and portrays the fears, the selfishnesses, and the cynicism of a mind which refused to accept law from on high, and yet feared to listen to the dictates of the people below. The *Leviathan* is the first great justification of dictatorship, but its doctrine can be accepted by no dictator. It is in brief the demo-

cratic argument for dictatorship, and as such, in spite of the rigour of its logic, it is based upon a fundamental contradiction. As Locke put it, 'as if when men, quitting the state of Nature, entered into society, they agreed that all of them but one should be under the restraint of Laws; but that he should still retain all the liberty of the state of Nature, increased with power and made licentious by impunity. This is to think that men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by polecats or foxes, but are content, nay, think it safety, to be devoured by lions.'

Critics of Hobbes have perhaps paid too much attention to his personal peculiarities. He has been treated as a freakish example of intellectual perversity, and the *Leviathan* has served as a contrast to the sanity and common sense of *Civil Government*. As a result, one of the greatest critical thinkers is chiefly remembered for a few malevolent aphorisms. That later generations should have so misunderstood him is only an illustration of our argument that British theorists have rarely been faced by the profound problems of the State. Alone of our classical thinkers Hobbes lived through an epoch of chaos in which the stability of the social structure was in imminent danger of dissolution. His confusions and contradictions are not due to any flaws in his logic—no thinker has been more ruthlessly consistent—but to the actual conflicts in the society in which he lived. Granted his premisses, granted the elements which he held to be necessary to any civilized society, no consistent theory was open to him, since absolute sovereignty was incompatible with the temper and the interests both of the property-owner and of the religious mind. The *Leviathan* is therefore an illustration in the realm of theory of the incompatibilities which produced the Civil War. Taking his world precisely as he found it, Hobbes found nothing that could reasonably be expected to hold it together. Both the incoherence and the unpopularity of his conclusions showed that some new unknown element was necessary to bring stability back to England. A political theorist can only analyse the data which he is given: Hobbes cannot be blamed for failing to prophesy that this other element would soon be available.

When we turn to the pleasant, almost sentimental, delicacies of



Locke's *Treatises of Government*, we feel ourselves at last in friendly and familiar country. Here is the 'typical English thinker,' rational but not rationalistic, moral but carefully unenthusiastic, shrewd but uncritical of basic principles. Locke is rightly extolled as the first theorist of representative government, but his admirers often go on quite wrongly to assert that he was the spokesman of democracy. No misrepresentation could be more absurd. *Civil Government* is the philosophy of a privileged class, jealous of its rights and sensitive to its responsibilities. It avoids the contradiction of the *Leviathan* not because Locke was more consistent than Hobbes—he was not—but because the propertied classes of England had developed an economic and social cohesion which rendered centralized despotism an anachronism. The upheaval of the Reformation was over: the convulsive death pangs of medievalism were stilled, and England could dispose of a tactless Stuart by a Glorious—and bloodless—Revolution. Whigs and Tories disagreed profoundly, but their deep-seated community of economic interests prevented either party from plunging the country into civil war. Hobbes had believed that the Leviathan must be imposed, artificially and from above, to create and to maintain social stability. Locke, writing after 1688, found that social stability ready made; and it becomes not the central problem but the central assumption of his theory.

We have only to glance at his theory of natural rights and at his picture of the state of nature to appreciate this difference. For Hobbes the State was an escape from anarchy, for Locke it is an instrument for improving the social order inherent in the nature of man. His natural man is a gentleman of rural England, with a comfortable property, and a respect for the property of others. In the everyday life of the country, with its traditional tables of rights and duties, he sees around him a society which in no sense owes its stability to a despotic Leviathan issuing its commands from London. And so he portrays the peace and prosperity of rural England as a *natural* state, whose intrinsic cohesion needs only the barest minimum of centralized government to preserve it from *unnatural* cupidity and ambition. Hobbes had tried, by the enforcement of despotism, to curb the war of

competing rights: Locke is above all else concerned to protect the natural harmony of natural rights from the encroachments of despotism. The sovereign Leviathan is degraded to a mere servant of the representatives of property. Sovereignty is in fact *abolished*, and in its place is established the principle of the division of power. In a country of honourable landowners, imbued with a sense of the responsibilities which privilege brings, Locke believed that every conflict can be solved by discussion and compromise, and every one of the representatives, who reluctantly leave their homes and drive up to Westminster, will be united in the determination to preserve the natural peace and order of the shires from the tyranny and extravagance of a royal executive. An executive there must be to maintain the army and conduct foreign policy, but this executive will be jealously watched by a Parliament suspicious of its vaulting ambition. Thus the legislature, in Locke's view, has as its chief task, not the promotion of beneficial legislation but the suppression of undue governmental activity.

Though political theories are conditioned by historic facts, they are not 'true' reflections of them. *Civil Government* is no more a picture of England after 1688, than the *Leviathan* is of England during and after the Civil Wars. For both are logical structures based upon generalizations and hopes and fears occasioned by real situations, and elaborated by individual minds. But once a theory has been worked out and published, it becomes itself a historical factor: and whether it is influential or not depends on the special conditions in any particular country. It is noteworthy that the *Leviathan* has affected pure theory more profoundly than politics. As a theory of practical application it was still-born, whereas Locke's *Treatises*, adapted as they were to the spirit of the new age, became the standard justification both of the Whigs in England and of the revolutionaries in America. For this reason, we tend to think of Locke as a typically English thinker, whereas we should be more accurate if we said that Locke's temper and conclusions were well suited to his age and later, when conditions changed, became an important obstacle in the way of adapting British policy and British institutions to a new environment.

We have noticed already the basic assumption of his philosophy that the rights claimed by individuals are harmonious, and that, for this reason, what we need are political institutions designed to prevent despotic power. Locke therefore makes his civil government both the protector of natural rights and the expression of the general will, and he assumes that no conflict can arise between them: the minority will accept majority decisions because they too have rights to be protected. He never considers the possibility of the majority wishing, for instance, to attack property and thereby jeopardizing the harmony of rights. Nor does he conceive that the people might desire institutions adapted not to the prevention of despotism, but to the achievement of positive good. Nor, lastly, does he believe that the populace will be continually active in its influence on the representatives. His is a theory of government, not by the people, or through the people, but for the people, and, once the government is constituted, the people have no right to interfere, except in the last extremity and by direct action.

### 3. GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT, PRESCRIPTION, AND STATUS

This principle has been maintained ever since Locke. Even after the development of democracy, government in England has remained the privilege of the few: the people choose their representatives, but do not rule themselves, and the general will in this country is not sovereign, but a check on government. The growth of the cabinet system, of the Civil Service, and of highly organized political parties has only deepened this sense of the indirect influence of public opinion, both in local and in national government. Englishmen are not political animals in the sense that they all wish to be politicians: on the contrary, they prefer to enjoy their private lives under a system of free institutions which hands over to an *élite* the control of policy and of administration. Unlike other western democracies, we have never preached or practised the sovereignty of the general will, nor sought to direct governmental policy by popular mandate. Instead, we have always retained, as our last defence against the

misuse of government, the right to direct action which is manifested in the strike, the riot, or the public demonstration. But such direct action is considered not as a part of government, nor as a regular practice, but as a sudden gesture of impatience, unpolitical, spontaneous, and abrupt, a reminder to our rulers that there are limits beyond which they must not try us. The General Strike was just such a movement. It was not a subversive plot of anarcho-syndicalists, nor yet was it an attempt to reshape the Government: on the contrary it was a non-political expression of sympathy with the miners, an effort by the people, not to throw off the shackles of government, but to indicate to the Government the deep dissatisfaction of the industrial workers. It is typical of British political thought and practice that the deepest dissatisfactions are voiced not through a parliamentary opposition or the normal channels of constitutional government, but through a non-parliamentary and non-political movement. The same inclination is to be found so long ago as in the days of the Anti-Corn Law League, so lately as in the Peace Ballot. In both cases it was a non-party voluntary association which roused the people against the policy of Government, and in both cases the people were true not to the theories of constitutional democracy but to the principles of *Civil Government*.

For this reason England has always been a mystery to foreign observers. The French and American democrat is at a loss to understand how a country so deeply imbued with social snobbery, and so little interested in problems of government, could call itself a democracy. They observe a people cleft by profound class divisions, in which the contrasts of riches and poverty, of culture and illiteracy are unpleasantly obvious; they see, in fact, the economic and social conditions of class war, which yet fail to produce a consciousness of class war; and they see, too, democratic institutions which run smoothly because the people rarely employ them for an attack upon privilege and inequality. If, however, they conclude that the English people are therefore subservient, they are sadly wrong. In no country is the intrinsic equality of human personality more deeply felt than in the north of England, in Wales, and in Scotland. The British industrial worker is not servile or obsequious to the ruling class, and yet

he leaves to that ruling class, without demur, the privilege of power. On the whole he neither demands nor feels the need of either political or economic equality. Confirmed in *his status*, jealous of the privileges which that status gives him, and ever on the alert to defend his local liberties, he does not conceive of comparing his position with that of other classes far beyond the boundaries of his communal life. The scope of his ambition (and after all the ideals of political and economic equality spring chiefly from this motive) is limited to immediate practical objectives. A worker with £3 a week may feel animus against a friend who has risen into the £5-a-week class, while he accepts without hesitation the fact that his doctor receives £1,000 a year.

Both the stability and the elasticity of social classes in this country have contributed to this. Stability has made them homogeneous and compact and given to each grade its sense of social position and social prestige. The vast majority in any one class remain contentedly within that class and aspire higher only for their children. This contentment makes the class take on the qualities of status. Elasticity, on the other hand, removes the feeling of caste divisions and so softens the stings of social injustice. The ladder can be and is often climbed. Social divisions are therefore not merely economic divisions, though they are largely conditioned by financial considerations. The worker recognizes the class difference between himself and a member of the upper classes, though wage and salary may be the same. He recognizes a difference in status on the same economic level and accepts it as a proper part of the social system.

No wonder the Frenchman or the American is puzzled. Here is a democracy which, in its social life, disregards the principles of equality, a peaceful community which admits within itself a whole scale of class-divisions, a contented nation which still permits political, economic, and financial power to be the privilege of a few. Naturally he concludes that British democracy is a sham, a façade, behind which lies an oligarchy of wealth and birth; and triumphantly he points to the 'Public school and private school system' as the clear proof that he is right. 'Whatever your democratic philosophers may say, whatever your political institutions may be,' he will argue, 'England remains

true to the principles and the sentiments of Edmund Burke. Tom Paine was the inspiration of America and of France, but his own country has firmly refused to listen to his democratic message. Instead it has absorbed the grandiloquent, inconsistent, and somewhat mystical gospel of the greatest opponent whom democracy has had to face.'

There is truth in this paradox. No writer felt the life of this country and experienced it more fully than Burke: and in his controversy with Paine we can see the struggle between political democracy and the social habits which still persist in English life. Paine tried to adapt the Lockean spirit to the new ideal of the General Will: to claim that the people should no longer consent to government from above, but claim sovereignty for itself. Burke rightly perceived that such a claim was fatal to the compromise by which Locke had solved the Hobbesian dilemma. If government was to be based on the harmony of natural rights, it could not derive authority from the majority of votes. The majority for him was fictitious and a pernicious concept, since it denied that complex system of status and of social classes in which each citizen felt that his true being lay. When in his *Appeal from the New Whigs to the Old* Burke maintained that the revolution of 1688 was not a democratic revolution, he was completely correct. And because England had, in the course of one hundred years, evolved a political system of free institutions compatible with the preservation of inequality and privilege, he was able to clothe the lucid reasonableness of Locke's thought in the gorgeous robes of sentiment and of tradition. The businesslike compromise of 1688 had become by 1790 an eternal verity of British justice, blessed with the benevolent approval of God on High.

The spirit of Burke still permeates British political thought and practice, and prevents the institutions of political democracy from bringing with them the spirit of social democracy. The gradual extension of the suffrage between the years 1832 and 1918 has not been accompanied by any real revolt against the hierarchy of social classes. The *bourgeoisie* did not destroy the aristocratic tradition; on the contrary, it was influenced by it, as deeply as it made its influence felt. The tyranny of the illiterate masses, which J. S. Mill feared in the sixties, did not result from the grant

of votes to the industrial worker. On the contrary, each new class, when admitted to political privilege, ranged itself dutifully in the ranks of the older parties, changing them, it is true, but permitting them to retain an unbroken continuity of tradition. And, finally, the growth of the Labour movement was accompanied by the growth of a labour and trade-union hierarchy as complex in its rules of precedence as the older aristocracy of birth and wealth. Burke is not the philosopher of British conservatism, but of British political life from Right to Left. His spirit informs the progressive movement as much as it informs the Conservative party. Gladstone, Ramsay MacDonald, and Lansbury, to name only three examples, are all of them thinkers who accepted without question the deep organic conservatism of British *social* life. Each may have passionately advocated certain economic or political reforms, and denounced certain flagrant social evils, as Burke denounced them; but, at bottom, none of them wished to abolish the structure of British society, but merely to eradicate the blemishes which marred it. None of them would have wished that this country should substitute the fierce warfare which characterizes democracy in France or America for the peaceful friendship between classes which predominates within their own country. In a very real sense, British political thought is pacifist through and through. Where it sees friendliness and kindness and co-operation, it cannot really denounce them, even though these sentiments are based on fundamental inequality and injustice. Where human feeling can join men of incompatible interests, the British politician seldom prefers the ruthless pursuit of justice to a kindly compromise. In their preference for kindness over principle, Baldwin and Lansbury are not far apart, and it is significant that they are the two living statesmen who have aroused the highest respect and affection of their countrymen. Their actions are based, not only on political principles, but on simple sentiments of social morality, and these sentiments are only possible to men and women who accept the fundamental goodness of the social order, and the divisions of status which it implies.

Here, then, is the peculiar contribution of Britain to the problems of freedom. It has up till now been able to retain a

really unequalitarian class-system in spite of the introduction of formal political democracy; and by so doing it has preserved a ruling class with a continuity of tradition and a fluidity of membership, easily able to adapt itself to the constant changes of political and economic environment. The sense of moral responsibility which inspires that *élite* is the factor upon which British justice and liberty depend, while the sense of security of the mass of citizens enables the *élite* to exert its authority without undue compulsion. The system depends, in short, upon the mutual confidence which exists between the unpolitical masses and the ruling hierarchy, whether in industry, in politics, or in the Labour movement. Given this mutual confidence, and this adherence to traditional status, democratic institutions can be operated with a minimum of risk. Contrariwise, given the democratic institutions, the masses can feel (whether rightly or wrongly) that they are free, if they so wish, at any moment to indicate to their rulers any disapproval of policy which they may feel, or even to throw them out; while the system of alternating party government enables this discontent to be expressed with the minimum of disturbance to a continuous governmental policy.

Thus, in a very real sense, British political thought is based on morality and works through custom. The constitution is impossible to analyse fully because it is a medley of traditions and statutes and institutions integrated only by instinctive obedience to 'the rules of the game.' It is only because, or in so far as, the rulers are willing to work it that it works, and this willingness is motivated by a respect for taboo as complex as that in any Melanesian tribe. Whether we examine local government or national government, the trade unions, or the churches, we find the same phenomena. Institutions of inconceivable complexity, often cumbersome and inefficient, are retained and worked by respect for 'correct behaviour' and 'fair play.' The ceremonies of the French court of 1780 are as nothing to the intricacies of the British social system. It hangs suspended, not by a single hair, but by a tortuous network of airy threads which could be severed by one violent stroke of economic or international adversity.

Most typical of this British preference for the fragile bonds of moral obligation is the present situation of the empire, in which



the Crown remains the one political unit to hold it together. This sentimental bond has been preferred to any formal constitution or rational plan. Its strength is known to no one, the obligations it imposes are obscure and deliberately unexplored. It seems almost as if the statesmen were saying: 'Ask no questions; undue curiosity will destroy the delicate framework of our imperial unity.'

The refusal to ask questions, and the belief in the natural growth of tradition as the surest foundation of authority, have produced an exuberant growth of governmental, semi-governmental, and voluntary organizations. Education, trade unionism, and medical services are only three examples of a universal tendency. In all are to be seen the results of the haphazard development of voluntary organizations, co-ordinated only at a late stage of their maturity. In each case respect for tradition and the jealous retention of useless privileges have resulted in an organization deprived of much of its social utility; on the other hand, by the sacrifice of social utility, the services have developed with a minimum of social disturbance. If they are often useless, and even harmful to the people whom they are supposed to serve, they are at least accepted as natural phenomena; and an Englishman prefers what is 'natural' to what is useful, unless the shoe pinches very hard.

Nothing else will explain the survival of the British system of law. Its division of barristers and solicitors, its recondite disregard of social utility, its unintelligibility, and its expense have been denounced by sensible men since Bentham and *Bleak House*. Derided by the onlooker, cursed by the litigant, it continues serene on its elusive way; and it continues precisely because its structure, in all its perversity, corresponds with and has grown up with the social and political institutions of the country. A country which prefers the subtle bonds of tradition, sentiment, and morality to the authority of interest and reason cannot expect to develop a rational system of law. Draftic legal reform is only necessary if reform of local government, of friendly societies, of education, are also undertaken. Where institutions survive their social utility and are still regarded with affection, it is unlikely that the Law will be anything but a complex confusion of precedents.

The business man or the trade unionist who curses it will find the cause of its evils in his own industry and his own union. A Burkeian respect for status and prescription may produce a political system based on morality; but never one which is rational, simple, or (in the French sense) democratic.

When Locke described the state of nature as precedent to civil government, or when later idealists distinguished society from the State and justified the latter in terms of the former, they were indicating this fact in a highly misleading way. For there is no such thing as British society, if by society is meant a single integrated unit; nor do its members possess natural rights, if by 'natural rights' we mean a clearly articulated body of reasonable claims. Though the State is considered as a necessary evil, tolerated only for the sake of the social life which it protects and from which it is sharply distinguished, yet that social life is not the life of equal and rational human beings. Indeed, the State is there to preserve the inequalities, the intricacies, and the injustices which haphazard growth and group loyalty has produced. Progress is permitted only where it does not violate too deeply the luxuriant growth of non-political institutions and traditions, and the Englishmen's 'political' activity and ideals express themselves naturally, not in 'politics,' but in the club and chapel, the 'pub' and the 'pool.' It is here in the organization and administration of voluntary groups that the Englishman's political talent is displayed, his loyalty and idealism aroused, and his capacity for partisanship most unexpectedly exhibited. Those who would study the politics of an English town, if they use the word 'politics' in a full Aristotelian sense, must look outside the town hall and turn their attention to the countless social groups which jostle one another in their competition for the working man's time. Each has its own traditions and habits and taboos, and most of them are genuine examples of democratic co-operation and spontaneous self-government. But their life and being is self-contained and non-political:<sup>1</sup> they do not challenge but make tolerable the inequality and injustice of the political and economic order. Again, we observe the same phenomenon: the English,

<sup>1</sup> Compare, for instance, the contrast between British and continental Free-masonry.

with an unrivalled faculty for self-government and toleration, a strong sense of group loyalty, and hatred of 'the boss,' dissipate all these talents in social organizations remote from the political field. And so, when they come to politics, they cease for the most part to be democrats and are content to consent to the benevolent despotism of a ruling class equally undemocratic and equally unwilling, for the sake of political and economic efficiency, to disturb the jungle of social anomalies of which this country's life is composed. In short, while they are democratic within their own social group, they have never tried to apply democratic principles to the interrelation of those social groups and classes in which they live. And, since it is only through State action that such a task could be properly tackled, we can justifiably maintain that the English have never seriously considered the political implications of social-democracy.

#### 4. UTILITARIANS AND IDEALISTS

If we have correctly described the essential characteristics of British institutions and British thought, we must admit that these characteristics are rarely mirrored in the writings of our theorists and pamphleteers. Apart from Burke and Disraeli, there is hardly one of them who has not denounced the system which we have described. Not till academic lecturers had the good fortune to read Hegel could a philosophy be discovered obscure enough to justify it, and to persuade rational men that obedience to an irrational process of development was the supreme manifestation of reason. The British idealists, however, accomplished this task, and in the works of Bradley, Green, and Bosanquet an aura of philosophic profundity was cast round the superstitious sanctifications of existing institutions and 'the law of their development.'

Apart from this aberration, which is fortunately past, British thinkers have been notoriously rationalist, free-thinking, and utilitarian. Hobbes, Locke, Paine, Hume, Bentham, Mill, and Bagehot form a continuous chain of intellectual development, fundamentally at variance with the British tradition as I have described it. Their philosophies differ profoundly, but they all agree in this—that acceptance of traditional forms is not sufficient,

that government is only defensible if it can be justified in terms of human need, and that custom, prescription, and status are often self-righteous cloaks for sinister interests and unjust privileges.

This uniformity of outlook is remarkable, and its reason is clear. Political thinkers, from Locke to Bentham, were always in revolt against the inconveniences of a stable social system. In their theories they picked out for praise precisely those elements which were lacking in the practice of their country, and omitted others so basic that they could pass unnoticed. To a people bound by ties of status and sentiment, they preached that mankind is individualistic and equal; to a nation of deeply Christian tradition, that religion is a myth based on utility; to monarchists, that royalty is a useful figment for the canalization of emotion. For a strong sense of national unity they substituted a social contract, or the common interest of isolated individuals. Thus the picture given by British political theorists of 'man the political animal' belies at every point the British political animal. The former is a cool and calculating hedonist, bound by no ties which self-interest cannot justify; the latter is a sentimentalist, content to accept ancestral institutions and modify them to existing circumstances according to the mysterious canons of fair play. Democratic thought in this country has been fiercely business-like precisely because it was fighting against a dead weight of tradition and a chaos of anachronistic institutions.

This tendency is seen very clearly in the Utilitarians. They are typical of English theory because they are so hard-headed, so one-sided, so essentially controversial in character. Not one of them was a philosopher or a scientist who really faced the essential problems of government: they were all pamphleteers inveighing against social evils, and, in the course of their attack, discovering a theory of government as a by-product of their political activity. Bentham became a democrat almost by accident through the failure of his proposals for legal reform; J. S. Mill a Socialist through his observation of how capitalism was operating. But neither Bentham nor Mill elaborated a theory of the new gospel they preached, nor recognized the one-sidedness of their point of view. This is equally true of their economics, which are better suited for pamphleteering than for serious scientific

analysis. Here, too, we can feel that we are confronted by a theory useful as an antidote to prevalent habits of mind, but singularly ill-adapted to be the basis of a detached study of wealth and its exchange. The contrast with Adam Smith is remarkable. *The Wealth of Nations*, perhaps the most influential book written by an Englishman in the eighteenth century, had world-wide influence just because it was not so narrowly conditioned by the political necessities of a party or of an interest. Vulgarizing Smith, the Utilitarians destroyed his universal validity, or rather pretended that their own special pleading was as firmly based on science as his cool speculations. Had British Liberals paid close attention to the master they pretended to revere, they would have discovered in his ethical philosophy, as well as in his severe limitation of the scope of *laissez-faire*, a statesmanship and an understanding of human nature to counterbalance the extravagance of their own polemics. Political economy, in fact, would have remained political economy and would not have degenerated into a false psychology and a barren economic theory which denied the existence or at least the relevance of any other science to the analysis of modern society. Adam Smith had a clear vision of human nature and of human society, but the Utilitarians neither presented a true picture of the landed aristocracy they denounced, nor of the middle classes whose spokesmen they purported to be, nor of the capitalistic system which they so heartily advocated. Instead, they portrayed, by an easy process of abstraction, the working of certain simple principles which they quite improperly assumed without examination to be the fundamental principles of current politics. Consider the following passage from James Mill's *Essay on Government*:<sup>1</sup>

'We have already observed, that the reason for which Government exists is, that one man, if stronger than another, will take from him whatever that other possesses and he desires. But if one man will do this, so will several. And if powers are put into the hands of a comparatively small number, called an Aristocracy, powers which make them stronger than the rest of the community, they will take from the rest of the community

<sup>1</sup> Cf. James Mill, *An Essay on Government*, with an Introduction by E. Barker, Cambridge 1937, pp. 12-13.

as much as they please of the objects of desire. They will, thus, defeat the very end for which Government was instituted. The unfitness, therefore, of an Aristocracy to be entrusted with the powers of Government, rests on demonstration. . . . If Government is founded upon this, as a law of human nature, that a man, if able, will take from others any thing which they have and he desires, it is sufficiently evident that when a man is called a King, it does not change his nature; so that when he has got power to enable him to take from every man what he pleases, he will take whatever he pleases. To suppose that he will not, is to affirm that Government is unnecessary; and that human beings will abstain from injuring one another of their own accord.

'It is very evident that this reasoning extends to every modification of the smaller number. Whenever the powers of Government are placed in any hands other than those of the community, whether those of one man, of a few, or of several, those principles of human nature which imply that Government is at all necessary, imply that those persons will make use of them to defeat the very end for which Government exists.'

Could anything be more pig-headed than this? As a sober elucidation of political problems it is laughable; as science, beneath contempt. And yet, given the atmosphere of the time, and the prejudices against which he was fighting,<sup>1</sup> it may well be that Mill's type of reasoning served a useful purpose by giving philosophic arguments to the practical advocates of reform. Be that as it may, it is certain that the theorists of freedom from Locke to Mill felt themselves to be a minority whose chief task was the denunciation of tradition and the propagation of a cool and narrow self-interest quite foreign to the British temper. Their function was that of the Socratic gadfly, not of the sober architect of a democratic constitution.

Moreover, their theories were only acceptable to the classes of which they were the protagonists for one reason, because they defended the interests of business and of property. Their individualism was that of the shopkeeper and the merchant, and their view of political institutions sprang from a belief that it was the job of Government to protect and encourage the production of

<sup>1</sup> Compare, for instance, Macaulay's review of the *Essay on Government*.

wealth. Democrats and rationalists up to the time of J. S. Mill were the champions of property against central authority, and in this sense Cromwell was the true forbear of Jeremy Bentham. Here again we note a characteristic peculiar to English thought and possible only in the historical environment of the English people. The interests of property can only challenge central authority, religion, and tradition in a country where national unity is assured, and where national security is only a secondary issue. The democrat could be antinomian only because of the overwhelming orthodoxy of his country; his individualism flourished behind her wooden walls; his advocacy of free trade convinced business men, because he and his English competitors enjoyed a monopoly of world trade. It was these factors which caused the sharp divorce between private business interests and State activity which is so characteristic of British Liberal theory. Assuming, and therefore disregarding all those vital forces which bound his country together, he was able to describe the British business man as a *pure* business man, and to advocate a State designed simply to promote the anarchic competition of private enterprise. And he was able to do this without harm, simply because the programme would by no conceivable possibility be fully realized. Utilitarian rationalism did not shock the religious susceptibilities and patriotism of the middle classes, because it was dealing with those political problems which those very classes considered to be business—and therefore materialist—problems. That British life could be so neatly divided into compartments was highly convenient, but it did not stimulate profound political thought. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Liberal theories of democracy evolved between 1790 and 1830 became relatively uninfluential as soon as the immediate objectives of the business community had been achieved. Utility, a powerful weapon in the attack upon privilege and sinister interest, gave no answer to the problems of government, as soon as power had been attained. 'The greatest good of the greatest number' could be used to denounce aristocracy but it was useless as a guide to the administration of a State. The middle classes in the middle of the nineteenth century had won the battle, only to find themselves disconsolately searching for a positive philosophy of

popular government. They found it, but in so doing they divorced themselves both from the life of the people and from the principles of democracy, and so the end of the nineteenth century saw the dawn not of political democracy but of a new era of free institutions under the capable control of a new ruling class. This change was mirrored in the revival of Oxford as the home of political theory.

- ✓ The British idealists mark an important stage of development—the divorce between political theory and political practice in this country. While the problems of imperialism, Home Rule, and trade union rights dominated practical politics, Oxford witnessed the growth of a philosophy too sublime to relate itself to such mundane matters. Flourishing between 1870 and 1914, its advocates elaborated a system of *metapolitics* by which they demonstrated the place occupied by the State in the essential nature of things. Their Hegelianism was combined with a Hellenism which saw in the Greek city State the prototype of all future civilized society, in Plato and Aristotle the fathers of all reputable philosophy. By merging Plato and Hegel and discarding the latter's dialectic of history, they produced a theory of political evolution purged of those conflicts which Hegel had seen to be the ingredients of all social change. In revolt against the materialism and economics of the Utilitarians, they pictured a social order unified by a single moral purpose, whose current morality was to be accepted as the provisional commandments of universal mind, and whose institutions were sanctified as the provisional optimum of historical progress. Freedom, they urged, was to be found by the individual in self-realization within this stable order, and criticism was only justifiable provided that it was positive—i.e. accepted the general presuppositions of current morality.

The disavowal of all scientific analysis of social institutions, the contempt for economics and for the party politics of democracy, and the revival of a type of political theory as dogmatic as that of divine right, are all signs of the successful attainment of power by the middle classes; from now on they are content, up till 1914, not to struggle for freedom, but to rationalize their acceptance of an unequalitarian society and to hand over to Providence the



work of attaining equal privileges for the lower orders. Their concept of the State as an instrument of positive good is the concept of a new ruling class, whose sense of moral responsibility, unlike that of the aristocracy, demands a philosophic justification for their new power. Themselves the General Will, the prime source of current morals, and the fount of public opinion, they look with pleasure on an idealized picture of the city State, and see in Plato's guardians, or Aristotle's noble citizens, their own philosophic forbears. And, with the growth of a Civil Service for the empire and for the home country, they find a form of public service which genuinely corresponds with the philosophy they praise. The State of which Bradley and Bosanquet have their conceptual visions is a great bureaucracy, ruled by an *élite* of moral beings educated in the new public schools, and their ideal is one of magnanimous public service which presents to the lower orders that standard of living and education of which they are worthy. Politics has become not a matter of business haggling or party strife, but of impartial administration by high-minded Athenian citizens.

The British idealists succeeded in moralizing the Leviathan which Hobbes had extolled: its sovereign becomes a public servant, who expresses the general will, because he has taught the masses what the general will should be. It is not therefore fear of attack, but devotion to the single-minded purpose of the State, which binds its citizens. In the State, each individual finds his true being and realizes his ends. The rationalism, the scepticism, and the fierce individualism of earlier democrats has disappeared, to be replaced by an obedience to tradition which Burke would have deeply applauded. From now on democracy must look for its advocates not to the prophets of the middle classes but elsewhere.

But while Green and Bradley and Bosanquet were thus providing the philosophical justification for breaking with the traditions of 'Manchester Liberalism,' others in the field of practical politics were moving in the same direction. A study of the life of Joseph Chamberlain would, I believe, indicate that this great statesman was facing with an impetuous and intuitive genius the self-same problems in a not dissimilar way. Chamber-

lain started as a middle-class leader of a radicalism pledged to oust the Whigs from the leadership of the Liberal party. A business man, a Unitarian, and a republican, he felt the need for the completion of the democratic revolution begun in 1832, and he created the modern extra-parliamentary party as an instrument by which the masses could bring their representatives to heel. For Chamberlain in his early years, Free Trade, the franchise, and education were the three rocks upon which the prosperity and freedom of his country should be built. That his attention was diverted from *laissez-faire* to the urgent need of imperial unity in the new international competition of rival empires, and that his belief in the panacea of the franchise was replaced by a vision of a 'social service State' is proof only of his amazing grasp of the actual historical changes which were soon to render Utilitarianism a meaningless anachronism. Chamberlain's quarrel with Gladstone meant that the only Liberal who was able to accommodate his theories to a changing world was forced to impose his philosophy of life upon the Tories and to give to that party a gospel without which it must soon have passed away. The new Unionist party became the true representative of British middle-class interests, and left room for a new political movement, the Labour party, to face it with a genuine conflict of interest and ideology. Between these two a Liberal party, which still refused to see what Chamberlain had the vision to predict, was only kept alive by sacrificing its principles and by the demagogic genius of Lloyd George, a statesman whose personality was equally well adapted to the philosophies of all three political factions. In this curious confusion, Chamberlain stood out as the one man who foresaw the inevitable development of British imperialism, and the new tasks of public service which now fell upon the middle classes in home and imperial affairs. While Green conceived 'the State as an instrument of positive good,' Chamberlain was prepared to break two political parties in order to carry this vision into action.

## 5. THE FABIANS

The year 1931 is a convenient, if arbitrary, date, which may be taken as a dividing line in the development of British political thought. It marks the close of an epoch of one hundred and fifty years during which the rate of increase in wealth, comfort, and power which this country had felt since the time of the Tudors had been vastly accelerated. To-day a generation is growing up for which the idea of progress is a Utopian delusion, of peace a romantic dream, of security a dim memory of the past. The halt in economic progress which between 1900 and 1914 had caused widespread industrial unrest, and the Boer War, which first exposed to the popular mind the grim necessities of imperial power, had not been sufficient to break the nation of its belief that it could look forward to a future of inevitable, if slow, advance towards the millennium. On the contrary, the first decade of the nineteenth century saw the birth of a Labour party whose intellectuals advocated the gradual realization of the bureaucratic vision of the British idealists, while its working-class leaders were busy turning it into a respectable institution of British social life. Even the Syndicalist dreams of G. D. H. Cole, in his Guild Socialist days, which were an attempt to evolve a British philosophy of revolution based upon trade unionism, evince a deep distaste for scientific Socialism. Nowhere in that anxious pre-War decade do we find a real advance of democratic theory; but only the uneasy feeling that all is not well which is reflected in the social novelists of the time, in Wells and Bennett, Chesterton, Shaw, and Belloc. Among these gifted amateurs, Graham Wallas stands out as a lonely scientist trying to look below the smug rationalizations of 'political theory' to the realities of political practice beneath. It may be said that he laid the foundations for a new theory upon which no one has yet begun to build.

The reason for this collapse of the rationalist tradition of British democracy is not far to seek. The cool self-interest and atomic individualism which our theorists had preached was the gospel of intelligent opposition to the lethargy and blindness of a strong national tradition; it was effective precisely as long as the class of property owners felt that tradition and centralized authority

were an obstacle to the fulfilment of their plans. But when in the middle of the nineteenth century the centralized State became a necessary function of the new industrial system, and the industrialist himself won his way to the seats of privilege, both Locke and Bentham became at once outmoded. Nor could the individualist tradition pass on to the working class who were now claiming political power. Their experience had taught them that by non-political co-operation in co-operatives and in trade unions they could best lay the foundations of security and freedom; and for this reason they were naturally inclined to a theory of group loyalty and group rights such as G. D. H. Cole propounded before the War. Political democracy for them remained a factor of secondary importance in comparison with the defence of their own industrial organizations. Only the close connection of nonconformity with the Independent Labour Party prevented the British Labour Party from developing a completely Syndicalist philosophy with its inevitable contempt for parliamentary democracy and political action. But Methodism was only able to evolve a crude application of Christian ethics to social problems, too vague to be the policy of a political party; and for this reason it fell to the middle-class Fabians to set their stamp on the philosophy of the Labour movement. British Socialism in their hands became not a battle for freedom against authority, but an attempt to mould the existing machinery of State to the benevolent wishes of an independent-minded middle class. It concentrated its efforts on wringing out of the existing ruling class not control, but concessions through the social services: its aim was a high standard of living, not freedom and power.

Here is the reason why in this country there has never grown up a Socialist theory of democracy on the lines of either Marxian or Anarchist philosophy: it is the reason, too, why the trade unions have maintained their control of the Labour movement. Only a Socialist party as fervent in its attack on privilege and as clear-cut in its philosophy as its Liberal predecessors could hope to dominate and shape the outlook of organized Labour. Up to 1931 such a party had failed to develop in Great Britain.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The uncertainty and lack of direction which we have noticed in democratic thought up till 1914 continued till 1931: indeed, it may be urged that it continues to-day. And yet I believe that 1931 was a dividing point both in England and in America. Far more thoroughly than the Great War, the Great Slump impressed on the Anglo-Saxon peoples the insecurity of the foundations on which their freedom and prosperity were based, and the rise of Fascism and of Fascist imperialism has only deepened that impression. England is now a country, not, as before 1931, living blindly on the traditions of the past, but groping towards a new philosophy both of domestic and of international affairs. The post-War effort to apply the principles of Lockean Liberalism to the building of a machinery of international order has failed as decisively as the Conservative struggle to return to pre-War 'normalcy.' The belief in national governmental organization as the instrument of positive good is also undermined. In short, the economic and social conditions which rendered Liberalism so palatable have gone, and we are at last aware that they are gone. For the first time since the era of Hobbes we are faced by problems which demand a radical solution, and which cannot be shelved by kindly compromise and 'muddling through.' At last we too have reached a crisis where the only practical course open to us is to become philosophers and undertake a radical analysis of the fundamental postulates of our society. We shrink from the task, and our fear of it is reflected in our political apathy; but that apathy is also a sign of a growing recognition that statesmen and theorists alike have nothing to offer us which can satisfy our newly awakened critical powers. The prime reason why electors will not vote is because they feel dimly but surely that the true alternatives are not presented to them, and that no party offers them any satisfactory philosophy of life.

The first result of this crisis has been the growth of two new movements of thought. In the first place Liberal political theorists, of whom Laski is the chief, have suddenly discovered in Marxism the refuge from their doubts: in the second place Christians and non-political thinkers, such as Aldous Huxley,

have developed a philosophy of pacifism which is basically anarchist in temper. Marxism and pacifism alone of contemporary movements seem to offer a clear and revolutionary philosophy to minds which realize that the pre-War era of security and progress is gone. But it is characteristic of the British temper that these philosophies have been accepted in their most dogmatic and least speculative forms. They have been seized upon as creeds, not assimilated as methods of thought; they have been welcomed for their final answer to all questions, not tested as lines of inquiry which could, after much research, enable us to evolve a new policy and a new direction for the democratic tradition. For this reason they are to be regarded more as emotional reactions to crisis than as positive contributions to its solution. Be that as it may, they are symptomatic of an era of painful transition more perilous than that which ushered in the industrial and democratic revolution at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For the first time for many hundreds of years this country is not only without a clear-cut philosophy, but in need of one. Only the future will show whether the habits of centuries will prevent its formulation.

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## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIETY AND POLITICAL THOUGHT IN FRANCE

#### I. FRANCE AND FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

FRENCH political thought throughout the eighteenth century received its essential impulse from two sources: discontent with the social and political systems prevailing in that country in an age of decadent absolutism; and the contrasting ideal of better social conditions acquired through acquaintance with the English body politic and its political philosophers. England was a mirror reflecting a picture which the leading minds of France in the eighteenth century held before the nation, so that French arbitrary methods and grievances appeared in disagreeably sharper contrast.

The drama of French political history in that era was enacted under three rulers. Nothing perhaps could show more clearly the gulf between king and subjects than the way the Paris mobs reacted to the deaths of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI. When Louis XIV died in 1715, the non-privileged classes had long realized the disproportion existing between the glamour of the court and social reality, between the warlike ambition of that monarch and the failure of his peace policy. On account of foreign wars the national debt of France had grown enormously, and Colbert's social reform had been nearly frustrated. The people celebrated the death of this great monarch, whom they had once lauded, by drinking toasts to each other, and curses accompanied his body as it was borne along for interment at Saint-Denis. A fresh wave of prosperity was hoped for through the accession of his great-grandson, and with it the opportunity of greater liberty of thought. These hopes, however, were doomed. In the sixty years' reign of Louis XV, the bankrupt economic position of the State worsened greatly and the privileges of the two upper classes were maintained even



more oppressively against the lower classes, whilst abroad the prestige of France was impaired through a weak foreign policy. The death of Louis XV in 1774 aroused, therefore, no regret, merely mockery. As the soldiers escorted his dead body to Saint-Denis, the crowd jeered and ridiculed the two favourite recreations of their late king—his hunting and his amours. The fate of Louis XVI is well known. When he mounted the scaffold in 1793, the mob surged to the place of execution, not this time with ineffectual curses but with the exultant cry of a newly created democracy: 'Vive la nation!' For this last monarch was no longer the personification, but only the shadow, of an effete institution which had perished through the blindness of its supporters and the indolence of the upper classes.

The reign of Louis XV is of decisive importance to the political theory of French enlightenment. The *ancien régime* for the first time, and almost completely, abandoned the dignity of monarchy. Louis XIV possessed a purposeful political will; Louis XV confined himself to the maintenance of the *status quo*, and, above all, to the gratification of his desires. Louis XIV embodied the power of absolutism; Louis XV maintained it with difficulty, and cynically anticipated its fall: *Après nous le déluge*. A writer like Voltaire could compare retrospectively the reign of Louis XIV with the ages of Pericles, Augustus, and the Medici, and admit the greatness and cultural importance of the sovereign despite his personal faults and clerical intrigues; but for the century of Louis XV he had only more or less veiled contempt. This contributed towards developing the disillusioned doctrine of his old age that history contains little sense and much nonsense.

During this period the contrast between the growing economic power and luxury of the *bourgeoisie* on the one hand, and its political impotence on the other, became increasingly noticeable. Louis XIV had reigned absolutely, that is to say, arbitrarily, but he had forced the nobility and clergy into the service of his centralized State; Louis XV, with his entire interest centred in horses, dogs, and mistresses (with the Marquise de Pompadour as his acting prime minister for some time), was no longer the master but the servant of the leisured classes. The fatal mistake of the French monarchy proved to be that, though it admitted

the prospering middle class to certain privileges, it did not admit them, in time, to political power.

As in the case of every system of dictatorship, the absolute monarchy was largely invested in a strictly centralized bureaucracy which jealously watched over any interference from outside. The former representation of the *États généraux* was not formally abolished, but since 1614 they had not been convened. The *Parlements*, representing the interests of the privileged classes, vainly resisted, however; it was not the king who reigned, but the *Conseil royal*, which, with about forty members besides ministers of State, included also other high functionaries. It had far-reaching legislative and executive powers, and determined, especially, the rate of taxation and its application. The most important member was the *Contrôleur Général des Finances*, who by degrees took over the offices of Minister of Commerce, Minister of Agriculture, and Minister of the Interior. At various times personages of distinction held this key position: Colbert has already been mentioned; later, in the eighteenth century, Turgot (1727-81) was its highly gifted and enlightened holder (1774-6). Although this brilliant physiocrat and champion of an enlightened absolutism soon had to resign office owing to the resistance which his bill for the reform of taxation and his suspension of the guilds evoked from the privileged class as well as from the *tiers état* in Paris, his attempt won him the admiration of the contemporary *philosophes* and still later influenced the more successful social reconstruction brought about by the French Revolution.

#### (a) SOCIETY AND STATE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

In his classic *L'Ancien Régime* de Tocqueville has strikingly described the structure of this centralized bureaucracy. It led to a rigid administration of affairs and to over-estimation of subordinate details. As early as in 1733 the Marquis d'Argenson, one of the shrewdest noblemen of that time, had written: 'Les détails confiés aux ministres sont immenses. Rien ne se fait sans eux, rien que par eux, et si leurs connaissances ne sont pas aussi étendues que leurs pouvoirs ils sont forcés de laisser tout faire

à des commis qui deviennent les véritables maîtres.’<sup>1</sup> Under the *Conseil royal* were the thirty *intendants* of the provinces, who, according to a saying of John Law, were the true rulers of France. For the *intendant* watched over the whole public life of his province: all meetings had to be announced by him, he had the control even of the smallest expenses of a village and had to fix all indirect taxes. This bureaucracy was, in intellectual and even in moral standards, far above the average, and might have proved a blessing if it had been counterbalanced by an efficient provincial representation. But every political regulator, every true embodiment of public opinion in France was lacking. The *Parlements*, which had the right of vetoing questions of legislation and taxation, completely failed under Louis XV. In 1771, with the suppression of the *Parlements*, the fight between both these political factors ended, and the functionaries, by Turgot’s orders, went into exile. His action met with the approval of the *philosophes*. When, later, a new *Parlement* was convened, it proved to be merely a phantom and had no importance whatever.

What were the shortcomings of this system of absolutism which acquired so many critics and enemies in the course of the century? The plight of the people, with no rights of their own and no redress against the arbitrariness of the courts and of bureaucracy, and in contrast to the one-sided social and financial privileges of the aristocracy and clergy, was truly appalling. The claims of the law of nature, which were based upon the English theory, represented in their French shape nothing else but the social reaction of the *bourgeoisie* and the peasants against a system which knew no liberty of thought, no freedom of the press or of assembly. It was as impermissible and dangerous then to criticize the Government as it is to-day in modern dictatorships. Moreover, the arbitrariness of the Government and of court cliques, which displayed itself in the issuing and revoking of decrees, was so strong that the centralism of the absolute monarchy which had, at first, shown itself to be a progressive factor in face of the disintegration of the various estates, became increasingly pernicious. Thus the great benefit which the action of the Crown had

<sup>1</sup> De Tocqueville, *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, Paris 1856, chap. vi, p. 96.

'undoubtedly rendered to France in unifying and consolidating the State, in harmonizing local usages, and curbing individual self-will, was half annulled by the new anomalies and disorders which the sovereign himself introduced' (Tocqueville). There was no guarantee by the State of civic rights where robbery or theft were not in question. By means of the *lettres de cachet* any citizen could be secretly arrested and without further ceremony imprisoned. Although those arrested were nearly always set free after a short detention and were treated comparatively mildly, such opportunities for satisfying the revenge of influential cliques or the malice of family intrigues could be seriously abused. But whilst the *lettres de cachet* affected all sections of the population and especially members of the upper classes, the injustice of taxation was one-sided and burdened those who were economically weak.

Not only was exemption from direct taxation—above all from the poll tax—extended to the two upper classes, but it was also possible for rich citizens to obtain complete or partial exemption by purchasing offices. 'To escape was a mark of social distinction' (H. Higgs). Sections of the bureaucracy, financiers, members and employees of universities, sought to increase their prestige by exemption. Whilst, however, the number of taxpayers steadily decreased, the total sum of collected poll-tax grew. The rate of the poll-tax was fixed arbitrarily and its application left to the discretion of the controllers. Often enough it was calculated according to outward display and general style of living, and apprehension of the consequences constituted a *distinct check to the creation of wealth and the increase of comfort*. The problem of the unjust distribution of taxation was the pivotal problem of France. More intensely feared than the thirty *intendants* were the fifty *fermiers généraux*, the lessees of indirect taxation. Leasing out to the highest bidder necessarily led to utter ruthlessness in tax-collection and to exploitation of the people.

In the eighteenth century France did not undergo any considerable change in its economic structure: it remained mainly an agricultural State. There was still 89 per cent of the population living in the rural areas, but, in contrast with England and eastern Europe, France did not possess large estates and might

at that time be described as a country of the *bourgeois* class and of a small peasantry. Undoubtedly until recently the extent of proprietorship of the land by the aristocracy has been overestimated; it varied in the various provinces, but rarely amounted to more than 30 per cent, the Church possessing about 6 per cent. None the less the pressure which these two leading estates—nobility and clergy—exerted on the peasants was considerable. The estate owners had still a formal seigniorage over the land of the peasants and claimed large tributes, to which burden was further added that of Church tithes. On the other hand, the peasants were personally free and actually possessed their land. The agricultural system was not in itself unsound, but the tendency of the nobility to extract as much money as possible from their feudal rights and from their leases increased more and more in this century, until in the last twenty years of the *ancien régime* the exploitation of dependent peasants became insufferable. Forgotten feudal rights were resuscitated and were met with the stubborn resistance of the conservative peasants, who hated and resented all innovations: aristocratic rights of the chase, and a feudal right by means of which a noble might often be at once party and judge in a case, were pressed to excess. The great efforts made by such *physiocrates* as d'Argenson and Turgot could obtain no amelioration of the agricultural conditions so long as the aristocracy and the *Parlements* were the champions of feudal rights.

Like the peasants, the artisans also were unprogressive and often found themselves in a miserable position. They remained obstinately loyal to the moribund guild system, but the State interfered increasingly until in 1776 Turgot dissolved the guilds, although only, as it proved, for a short time. Moreover, owing to the system of concentration of capital, the artisans became increasingly dependent on *entrepreneurs* and manufacturers. In certain industries, such as the tailoring trade and the silk trade, enterprising merchants had hundreds of artisans working for them and collected their products in their own workshops. Even though on the whole small or medium-sized establishments remained in a majority, industrial progress was due (unlike the position in England) not to private initiative but, especially in

the cotton and heavy industries, to mercantilistic protection by the State with a system of privileges, monopolies, and subsidies. Already in retrospect the beginnings of capitalistic development may be recognized, particularly in the iron and steel industry and in coal-mining. According to H. Sée—perhaps the greatest authority on French economic history of that age—industrial capitalism in that country was a result of international trading capitalism. Between 1716 and 1789 French foreign trade quadrupled in volume. The importation of cotton-wool to the harbours of Normandy corroborates Sée's estimate, as it offered an essential stimulus to the development of the cotton industry.

The new class of merchants and *entrepreneurs*, of shipowners and bankers, developed a capitalistic ideology based on the self-confidence occasioned by their economic prosperity. In the seventeenth century an important change had taken place in the attitude of the upper and middle classes—a deviation from the ethics of the Church to those of secularism. B. Groethuysen points out in his penetrating study, *Origines de l'esprit bourgeois en France* (1927), that the ethics of a rationalized integrity in economic life replaced more and more the Christian devotion to the transcendent. A man no longer sought primarily to be a Christian, but an *honnête homme*, and instead of charity and love of one's neighbour, diligence and shrewd foresight were regarded as the radical virtues. Not every one, however, had the chance of being an *honnête homme*. In this worldly morality only property guaranteed honesty and, vice versa, honesty guaranteed property. Measured by this new temporal scale of values, public welfare, fair dealing, order, and social peace were the essential values in the eyes of the *bourgeoisie*. The proprietary *bourgeois* class was the more inclined to stress its own virtues and achievements as participation in political power was resolutely refused to it. The newly rich might buy estates and thereby aristocratic titles; they might adapt themselves through intermarriage to the style of the aristocracy: but, for the most part, the *tiers état* remained excluded from all higher offices, and after the second half of this century was expressly debarred from commissioned ranks in the army.

The monarchs were to a large extent the cause of the migration

of the aristocracy from the country to Paris and to the court, with the consequent estrangement of the latter from responsible regular duties. In the eighteenth century there were in France about eighteen thousand aristocratic families, comprising about four hundred thousand members. Whilst high military posts and church offices were open to the whole aristocracy, the aristocratic courtiers enjoyed special privileges and royal pensions, which led inevitably to a life of idleness and luxury. The patriarchal attitude which the English, and in part also the German, aristocracy displayed towards the people was practically unknown to the French nobility. Apart from a small minority, this class remained functionless and parasitic. But the desire of its members for excitement was such that they were intrigued by the *bons mots* and brilliant social criticism of the *philosophes* in the *salons* of urban patricians and Parisian financiers, and enthusiastically applauded these prognosticators of their own future destruction in the years before the Revolution. The success of Beaumarchais's *Figaro* strikingly reveals this: 'L'horreur des abus, le mépris des distinctions héréditaires,' complained the Vicomtesse de Noailles, 'tous ces sentiments dont les classes inférieures se sont emparées dans leur intérêt ont dû leur premier éclat à l'enthousiasme des grands, et les élèves de Rousseau et de Voltaire les plus ardents et les plus actifs étaient plus encore les courtisans que les gens de lettres. L'exaltation chez quelques-uns allait jusqu'à l'aveuglement. . . . Enfin, comme l'Astrologue de la fable, on tombait dans un puits en regardant les astres.'<sup>1</sup> Although the aristocracy prevailed less in the State than in the Church, the abuses within the latter met with much stronger opposition than those in the former. The violent struggle between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, which ended in the defeat and finally in the prohibition of the Order of Jesus (1761-4), revealed their reactionary despotism. Through their control over education and welfare institutions the clergy had exercised considerable power, but within their own ranks was the seed of dissension and of ultimate disintegration. The social differences between the higher, wealthy, aristocratic cleric and his lower, poor, non-privileged

<sup>1</sup> M. Roustan, *Les Philosophes et la société française au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1911, p. 211.

brother were such that the former would not receive the latter at table. For this reason the *curés*, in 1789, ranged themselves on the side of the *tiers état* at the assembly of the *États généraux*.

(b) THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT

The French *philosophes* of the eighteenth century measured these conditions against the standard required by reason and they demanded their reform. If they confined themselves rather to general postulations than to critical analysis of concrete society, the reason is to be found in part in the censure which pursued the author of any direct criticism, however harmless, of the existing order; further, they lacked experience of politics, in which, compared with their English prototypes, Harrington and Locke, the French *philosophes* and propagandists with a few exceptions played no part during the *ancien régime*, a deficiency that gave them no chance of combining theory and practice in a productive way, for, as commoners, they were confined to cautious theoretical discussion of political laws and structure. It was in the atmosphere of the *salons* that ideas of enlightenment received their first impulse and grew to perfection. In the seventeenth century La Rochefoucauld and Pascal had been solitary aphorists, but in the eighteenth century Voltaire and Montesquieu were social philosophers influenced by society and writing for it. They felt themselves understood in the *salons*, and the requirements of this polite society imposed on them in turn an easily readable and agreeable style. The philosophers were read by a part of that very class which persecuted them. The list of subscribers to the *Encyclopédie* edited by Diderot and d'Alembert includes an astonishing array of aristocratic names side by side with those of abbés, magistrates, intendants, and financiers. But the leading French intelligentsia could not dispense with the patronage of the ladies of the *salons*. Neither Montesquieu nor d'Alembert could have entered the Academy without female protection, and one of these influential ladies, Madame du Deffand, managed in a single year to place three of her favourites amongst the *immortels*.

The atmosphere of approbation and support in the *salons* was some compensation for the persecution from which the writers in



this Age of Reason had to suffer. Many of the official adverse verdicts and orders for suppression of their books remained, it is true, only on the statute book and were not enforced. Yet even a book which had received the approval of the censor could at some later date be suppressed by the intervention of the clergy or the *Parlement*.

After the publication of *Émile* (1762) Rousseau was forced by the Roman Catholics to take refuge in Switzerland, where shortly after his arrival the Protestant population in their turn were roused to persecute him. Following Voltaire's example he then, in 1766, found safety in England. In like manner Diderot and other Encyclopaedists had to pay with imprisonment for their publications.

Pressure by the authorities forced writers to confine themselves to generalizations, as a glance at the *Encyclopédie* or at Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* shows, but at the same time they strove to hide truth skilfully and to make it attractive by veiled allusions and allegories. Their watchword under the circumstances was: Never speak of things directly, but always point to them indirectly.

Thus they did not criticize France itself directly, but indirectly by portraying oriental characters, as in Montesquieu's sarcastic and somewhat obscene *Lettres persanes* of 1721, or they waged the fight of reason and progress against the stupidity and malice of retrograde institutions in essays on foreign conditions, as in Voltaire's article, 'Liberté de penser,'<sup>1</sup> which in the form of a dialogue between an enlightened English colonel and a stupid Spanish count, demonstrates the advantages of an enlightened and the disadvantages of a despotic government. From the middle of the century the influence of the *philosophes* grew apace; Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and Voltaire's *Lettres sur les Anglais* in 1734 only began the struggle towards enlightenment, but Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois* (1748) and Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), and the volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, which first appeared in 1751, were events which ultimately stirred the educated people of France.

The political ideas of the *philosophes* were not new, but they were attractive. Their task was not one of creating but of propagating,

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionnaire philosophique*.

not one of speculation but of proclamation. 'Nous ne sommes pas faits en France pour arriver les premiers,' Voltaire wrote to Helvétius, 'les vérités nous sont venues, mais c'est beaucoup de les adopter.'

During the seventeenth century in France the philosophical constructions of the rationalists and the psychological aphorisms of the moralists were at variance, but this disagreement was eliminated in the eighteenth century. A belief in the rationality of nature and its laws resulted in an optimistic estimate of man. To a certain extent a change from the *introverted* to the *extroverted* type took place in France. Reasonable activity and moderate enjoyment of life now replaced the former ideal of pure spirituality or of a courtly form of art. The difference between seventeenth-century conceptions of the art of living and those of the *philosophes* in the eighteenth century appears perhaps nowhere more distinctly than in the comments of the young Voltaire on Pascal. Voltaire (1694-1778) attacks the Christian melancholy and spirituality of Pascal, which this scoffer and enemy of the Church cannot understand at all. Enjoyment of life and fear of life, epicureanism and pessimism, are in sharp and incompatible contrast in the two authors. When Pascal says that man is weak and miserable because of original sin he confuses, according to Voltaire, the general human character with that of a certain limited, melancholic type.

Voltaire expresses the worldly optimism of a prosperous *bourgeoisie* the members of which had learned to use their minds: 'Mais pour peu qu'on se serve de sa raison, on avouera que de tous les animaux l'homme est le plus parfait, le plus heureux, et celui qui vit le plus longtemps.'<sup>1</sup> The brilliance of the western European capitals at this period of early capitalism banished for Voltaire all melancholy thoughts: 'Pour moi, quand je regarde Paris ou Londres, je ne vois aucune raison pour entrer dans ce désespoir dont parle M. Pascal; je vois une ville qui ne ressemble en rien à une île déserte, mais peuplée, opulente, policée, où les hommes sont heureux autant que la nature le comporte. . . . Notre existence n'est point si malheureuse qu'on veut nous le faire

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Voltaire, *Remarques sur les Pensées de Pascal*, Œuvres complètes, Paris 1879, vol. xxii, pp. 27-61.

croire.’<sup>1</sup> Pascal refers to the *ignorabimus* of Socrates, but Voltaire distinguishes carefully between the relative ignorance of the scholar and the absolute ignorance of the uneducated man. The laws of the universe, he has learnt, like those of human society, are comprehensible and have already been expounded by Newton and Locke. Man is a reasonable being with a right to happiness, and he can be happy in a reasonable organization of society. Not tradition, which is incidental, but the requirements of men and of human reason, which are fundamental, should determine all political institutions.

Natural rights arise from natural needs. ‘A government fails,’ it has been aptly formulated, ‘in so far as it omits to recognize and give scope to these fundamental needs of human nature. In this sense natural rights, as the *philosophes* argued, are anterior to the State, since they arise out of the continuous demands of man. . . . It remains true that the State must be judged by its capacity to secure the rights of man.’<sup>2</sup> It was the intention of the *philosophes*, from Bayle to Voltaire and Diderot, to contrast the despotism of the State with the liberty of the individual. But these Frenchmen were to discover that their advocated rights of man actually existed abroad, a discovery which proved sensational. England became the model for the French rationalists of the eighteenth century as, later, it was to be that of the German Liberals of the nineteenth century. Voltaire’s *Lettres sur les Anglais* (1734) formed the bridge from English enlightenment to French. At the same time they began his crusade against absolutism, against aristocratic privileges, and against the insensate craving for power. The sincere admiration which this witty philosopher had for England was threefold: he appreciated her trade, he admired her science, and he regarded her political and religious tolerance as exemplary. Voltaire provided the first penetrating exposition of the doctrines of Locke, played off English empiricism against the rationalism of Descartes, and, at the same time, upheld free learning against the doctrines approved by State and Church.

The young Voltaire had vainly attempted to succeed in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Kingsley Martin in his admirable book *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, London 1929, p. 133.

aristocratic and courtly circles, and, the more for this disappointment, he later became the eulogist of the commoners, i.e. of the commercial virtues. Himself a venturesome speculator, he liked during his later life to mix freely with financiers. He found civic liberty and trade inseparably connected in England, where property and liberty guaranteed and embodied quite another scale of social values. 'Le commerce qui a enrichi les citoyens en Angleterre a contribué à les rendre libres, et cette liberté a étendu le commerce à son tour: de là s'est formée la grandeur de l'État.'<sup>1</sup> In France the ruling class spoke disdainfully of the merchant and made him feel this contempt, but in England the barriers between the aristocracy and higher *bourgeoisie* were broken down to a large extent, and the merchant enjoyed the reputation he deserved. 'Je ne sais pourtant lequel est le plus utile à un État ou un seigneur bien poudré qui sait précisément à quelle heure le roi se lève, à quelle heure il se couche, et qui se donne des airs de grandeur en jouant le rôle d'esclave dans l'antichambre d'un ministre—ou un négociant qui enrichit son pays, donne de son cabinet des ordres à Surate et au Caire, et contribue au bonheur du monde.'<sup>2</sup> England, however, appears in these letters not only as the paradise of merchants, but also as that of writers. In France a man of the rank of Addison might perhaps have received a pension of twelve hundred francs through feminine patronage while remaining vulnerable to prosecution for some harmless passage in one of his tragedies, but in England Addison could enjoy public prestige and became Secretary of State.

Undoubtedly at times Voltaire and Montesquieu idealized the English situation, but, on the other hand, Voltaire rightly drew attention to the situation of the Quakers—with some of whom he made personal contact—who were to him representatives of the longed-for *natural religion*. It was a fact that, even in England, religious minorities such as the Quakers, the Catholics, and the Nonconformists, were not granted full political rights, although a degree of tolerance resulted from the multiplicity of churches and sects.

But no idealization of their state by foreigners was necessary as far as the English peasantry was concerned. The English

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *Lettres sur les Anglais*, Dixième lettre.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

peasant—according to Voltaire—was not pauperized and could venture to enlarge his farm or to cover his roof with tiles without going in permanent fear of higher taxation, like his French brother.

Liberty and tolerance are demanded by Voltaire, as by the Encyclopaedists, but the liberty is rather civic than political—*freedom from* abuses and interference by the Church, from arbitrary arrest, from such a fanatical and venal ‘justice’ as Voltaire had courageously exposed in the famous cases of Jean Calas and Tirven, but *not liberty for* unlimited political activity or for the formation of political groups and parties. Voltaire rejected the principle of rule by the masses; he even condemned them as *canaille*. *Les philosophes* wanted reform but not revolution, the rebuilding of the existing State system, but not the erection of a new one. In this sense Voltaire was a friend of Frederick the Great, as was Diderot of Catherine II. Montesquieu expresses best this ideology of the *juste milieu*: ‘La place naturelle de la vertu est auprès de la liberté extrême ainsi qu’auprès de la servitude.’ They wanted an enlightened monarchy, not despotism; individual liberty, not social equality; rationalistic deism but not subversive atheism. For, according to Voltaire, the highest social order is based on liberty of opinion equally with security of property. Equality, though appearing an axiomatic postulate, is in reality a chimera in the opinion of a *bourgeois* Epicurean such as Voltaire, ‘to whom the preservation of order was nature’s first law.’<sup>1</sup>

In this era the Church no longer represented the model institution; the stock exchange appropriated this distinction. The stock exchange was, indeed, tolerant, and liberty of thought at this period of early capitalism had its prototype in liberty of trading: ‘Qu’à la bourse d’Amsterdam, de Londres, ou de Surate, ou de Bassora, le Guèbre, le Banian, le Juif, le Mahométan, le Déicole Chinois, le Bramin, le Chrétien Grec, le Chrétien Romain, le Chrétien Protestant, le Chrétien Quackre trafiquent ensemble, ils ne lèveront pas le poignard les uns sur les autres pour gagner des âmes à leur religion.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, London 1936, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, art. ‘Tolérance.’

Of the two other leading thinkers of the eighteenth century with whom we are here specially concerned only Montesquieu (1689-1755) was by birth not a commoner. A member of an old French aristocratic family, he entered upon a legal career. He early inherited from his uncle the office of president of the *Parlement de Bordeaux*, but at the age of thirty-seven he sold it in order to devote himself entirely to his studies: he did not feel himself fitted for the career of an official, but rather for the freer life a brilliant writer might command. Montesquieu combined the study of antiquity and of the Middle Ages with extensive journeys in England and on the Continent. When in France he lived mainly in his *château* at Brède or was to be seen being fêted in the literary *salons* of Paris. But even as an enlightened aristocrat Montesquieu remained loyal to the corporate attitude of the *Parlements*. He considered them as the strongholds of liberty, to be maintained as aristocratic intermediate links between the Crown and the people. The Roman republic, the medieval aristocracy, the English constitution, contained the exemplary elements of his conception of an aristocratic monarchy, augmented by some form of democratic institution.

In his political writings Voltaire was a social critic and a practical reformer, but Montesquieu was a philosopher of history and a sociologist. The first had a critical belief in reason, a consciousness of the coherent norms immanent in the historical process; the latter realized the wealth of historical phenomena, and stressed rather the structural variety of those causal factors in history which determine the socio-historical world, its relativity rather than the one universal law of reason. As a Frenchman, Montesquieu shared the belief in enlightenment and in the reign of law in the universe, but he also realized acutely the essential difference between natural laws and those of the body politic. The former are autonomous and absolute, the latter conditioned and relative. Assuredly this philosopher crystallizes the true meaning of French rationalism when he avows: 'La loi en général est la Raison humaine, en tant qu'elle gouverne tous les Peuples de la Terre; et les Lois Politiques et Civiles de chaque Nation ne doivent être que les cas particuliers où s'applique cette Raison humaine.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, livre i, chap. iiii.

Montesquieu develops, in an unsystematic but fascinating manner, a description of the many factors which form the historical plexus. These factors are both political and non-political. The former are described by him as the character and principle of government, the latter as constituted by the geographical structure of a country, its size, the number, customs, and occupations of its population, its wealth, its trade, and its religion. The influence of the economic structure is least considered, but the influence of the political system, of climate, and religion play an important part. Montesquieu offers a kind of morphology of politics, and is thus a successor of Machiavelli and Bodin as well as a precursor of that philosophical view of history which later on was developed into a morphology of culture by Herder, H. Taine, and Spengler.

Montesquieu's conception of humanity is neither that man is bad by nature, as Hobbes thought, nor that he is good by nature, as was Rousseau's view, but rather that he is dependent upon, and his character determined by, many extraneous causes: the doctrine of relativism is in Montesquieu the result of deep experience: 'Plusieurs choses gouvernent les hommes: le climat, la religion, les lois, les maximes du gouvernement, les exemples des choses passées, les mœurs, les manières: d'où il se forme un esprit général qui en résulte.'<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of the law is politically dependent on the character as well as on the principle of government. The nature of a government is its political form: e.g. under monarchy, the constitutional government of a monarch; under democracy, the indirect government of the people; under a despotism, the arbitrary power of an individual. Ambition and avarice are the main motives in a monarchy, love of equality and simplicity in a republic: 'L'esprit de la monarchie est l'agrandissement: l'esprit de la république est la paix et la modération.' Montesquieu hated despotism, but none the less feared the excesses of a misconstrued democracy.

The old question of the best political system is, in Montesquieu's opinion, decided by the relative approach: for the value of a political system is determined by the dimensions of the State. A monarchy should be of medium size, a republic small, as the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. livre xix, chap. iv.

examples of Geneva and Holland teach; despotism invariably inclines to great expansion.

Montesquieu's analysis of the relationship between political systems and geographical-climatic factors reveals his great knowledge of ethnology. Political systems are dependent on man's character, and man's character again is determined by climate. 'Comme on distingue les climats par les degrés de latitude, on pourrait les distinguer, pour ainsi dire, par les degrés de sensibilité.'<sup>1</sup> The same operas, for instance, produce different effects upon English and Italian audiences; the former react with the composure and self-possession of a nordic, the latter with the passion and violence of a southern people. As regards climate, despotism is correlated with the east, moderate political systems with the west.

It is significant of French enlightenment that its trend was not regional, but international, not patriotic, but European. Thus Montesquieu's prejudices are not French but European. The superiority of the occident over the orient is for Montesquieu, in spite of all his mockeries, indubitable. He regards slavery as no less a product of the Asiatic climate than liberty of the European. A similar identity of structure exists between climate and religion. Moderate government is in harmony with moderate climate and with Christianity, whereas an extreme climate produces both despotism and Mohammedanism. A correlation may also be noted between monarchy and Catholicism, and between republicanism and Protestantism. It is significant of Montesquieu's comparative and analytical approach that to him the idea of tolerance does not result from the similarity of all religions, as it does to Voltaire or Bodin, but from the differences of the various creeds. Montesquieu asserts that climatic conditions render difficult the transfer of one and the same faith from one country to another and therefore promote indirect tolerance. 'Il semble, humainement parlant, que ce soit le climat qui a prescrit des bornes à la religion Chrétienne et à la religion Mahométane.'<sup>2</sup>

The sociological relativism of this versatile thinker reveals itself not only in his analysis of the interdependence of political phenomena, but also in his description of social attitudes, of their

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. livre xiv, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. livre xxiv, chap. xxvi.



advantages and disadvantages. *L'esprit de commerce*, for instance, praised by the biased Voltaire, leads, according to Montesquieu, to a certain sense of exact justice, but is, on the other hand, limiting to generosity. By comparison the spirit of adventure lacks the precision of the shopkeeper but develops a degree of generosity seldom found amongst tradespeople.

In contradistinction to the Encyclopaedists, Montesquieu was no moralist; but he did not wish to be considered an opponent of the moral conventions or a subversive free-thinker. A philosopher of the eighteenth century could not but apologize for each scientific and positivist analysis of moral phenomena. Therefore Montesquieu says, after an examination of the virtues and vices of the Spanish and Chinese economic spirit: 'Je n'ai point dit ceci pour diminuer rien de la distance infinie qu'il y a entre les vices et les vertus: à Dieu ne plaise! J'ai seulement voulu faire comprendre que tous les vices politiques ne sont pas des vices moraux... et c'est ce que ne doivent point ignorer ceux qui font des lois qui choquent l'esprit général.'<sup>1</sup>

Voltaire's problem was the struggle of reason against the reactionary tendencies in society, that of Montesquieu the connection between norm and relativity in the political sphere. Rousseau's problem, however, was first and foremost that of the dualism between nature and culture, between primitive and modern society. The ideas of the watchmaker's son differ from those of the two previously quoted writers in two respects: he does not display their intimate interest in history, and he is neither by birth nor inner inclination a member of the upper classes and of refined Parisian society. Although Rousseau (1712-78) in his stormy life did not refuse to accept the patronage of prominent courtiers and aristocrats, he remained with his lack of equilibrium and his rather feminine eccentricity essentially the plebeian, without the dignity of the aristocrat or the calculating mind of the *bourgeois*. The rapid, frivolous witticisms of the *salons* remained as foreign to him as did the careful speculations of the *bourgeois*. Rousseau was no cold scoffer, nor was he an aesthetic sociologist like Montesquieu. His emotions almost always governed his reason, passion dominated his often unclassic

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. livre xix, chap. xi.

mode of thought. With all these qualities, Rousseau—actually rather a member of the fourth than of the third *état*—became a sharp critic of contemporary culture and the constructor of an abstract democracy. His life was not, like Montesquieu's, that of a well-to-do traveller, but that of a hunted vagabond. He was often persecuted and he suffered from a permanent persecution mania. Several times he changed his profession, country, and religion. He began as clerk to a municipal official in Geneva, was apprenticed to an engraver who maltreated him, became converted to Catholicism in Turin, served as a lackey to an Italian aristocrat, tramped through the highways and byways of France, and established himself in Neuchâtel as music-teacher, supported by his patroness and friend, Madame de Warens. After a friendship which lasted ten years he left her and became first a private tutor, then secretary to an envoy, and then a contributor to the *Encyclopédie* in Paris. Again he reverted to Protestantism, this time in order to acquire civic rights in Geneva, as he was forced by the suppression of *Émile* to flee from France into Switzerland. The Protestants, however, now persecuted him no less than the Catholics had previously done. Finally, we find him in England, the guest of David Hume, writing the first six books of the *Confessions*. After 1770 Rousseau was allowed to return to Paris on condition that he wrote nothing derogatory to the Government. He died in 1788, whilst staying as a guest of the Marquis de Girardin.

Rousseau's restless mind embodied a paradox; it was puritan as well as romantic, moralist as well as sentimental. He once said sadly of himself that it sometimes seemed to him as if his heart and his mind belonged to different individuals. This dualism is also reflected in his writings on political and cultural problems. A wide gulf divides his passionately sentimental attack on society, art, and learning in the academical dissertation of Dijon (*Discours sur les arts et sciences*, 1750), which won a prize and made him famous, from his rational construction of a democratic society in the *Contrat social ou Principes du droit politique* (1762), which placed him among the great political thinkers. Manifold are the attempts that have been made, in the enormous mass of literature that has been written round the man Rousseau,

to find some direct line of development in his thought, but so far these seem to have failed; for Rousseau was not a systematic thinker; he possessed a mind dependent to a great extent on his momentary and necessarily changing ideas and emotions. He reconstructed imaginatively a prehistoric state of nature, as well as a future rational society; he did not search for existent facts but for principles which he supposed to have been valid in the state of nature, or which should be valid in a future civilized society.

Rousseau's first big problem, which engaged him again and again in his various *discours*, in his novels and in his writings on education, was the tension between nature and civilization, sentiment and reason. Previous theories on the state of nature had all emphasized its inferiority to the state of civilization. Rousseau, however, with originality, praised the beauty of the natural state and denounced the civilization of his time. He was not at ease in the *salons* or amongst the Bohemians of Paris where men regarded each other with mockery and malice. Art and science, so Rousseau's early thesis runs, do not improve morals, but weaken them. Malice, egotism, and deceit are hidden beneath the mask of goodwill and courtesy which men wear for show. From this viewpoint Rousseau formulated a problem which has ever since been an infallible incentive to discussion, and which to-day psycho-analysis shrewdly calls the 'discontent of civilization.'

This democratic moralist and second Savonarola hated the luxury of the age of early capitalism and the heartlessness of its commercialists. 'Que deviendra la vertu, quand il faudra s'enrichir à quelque prix que ce soit? Les anciens Politiques parlaient sans cesse de mœurs et de vertu; les nôtres ne parlent que de commerce et d'argent. . . . Ils évaluent les hommes comme des troupeaux de bétail.'<sup>1</sup> Mankind was happier without culture, for primitive man lived instinctively, free from the stupidity of brutes as well as from the corruption of civilization. Property and civilized love were both unknown to him, together with their consequences—exploitation, usurpation, jealousy, adultery, and other evils of modern society.

In his earlier writings Rousseau stressed the liberty of the

<sup>1</sup> *Discours sur les arts et sciences*, Seconde Partie.

natural state, but in the *Contrat social* he accentuated the security of the civilized state. Property, as the basis of society, had at first for him a negative, but later a positive function. To the author of the *Discours* the introduction of property meant the beginning of social inequality. 'Le premier qui ayant enclos un terrain s'avisa de dire: ceci est à moi, et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile. . . . Telle fut ou dut être l'origine de la société et des lois, qui donnèrent de nouvelles entraves au faible et de nouvelles forces au riche, détruisirent sans retour la liberté naturelle, fixèrent pour jamais la loi de la propriété et de l'inégalité, d'une adroite usurpation firent un droit irrévocable, et, pour le profit de quelques ambitieux, assujettirent désormais tout le genre humain au travail, à la servitude et à la misère.'<sup>1</sup> Very different, however, is Rousseau's judgment on this change from the primitive state to civilized society in the *Contrat social*. It is no longer deplored as the cause of loss of natural innocence, but depicted as a progress to the rationalization of life. 'Ce passage de l'état de nature à l'état civil produit dans l'homme un changement très remarquable, en substituant dans sa conduite la justice à l'instinct et donnant à ses actions la moralité qui leur manquait auparavant.'<sup>2</sup> This progress is due to the contract which each individual concludes with all others.

A main function of this contract is to guarantee the property of the individual. 'Ce que l'homme perd par le contrat social, c'est sa liberté naturelle et un droit illimité à tout ce qui le tente et qu'il peut atteindre; ce qu'il gagne, c'est la liberté civile et la propriété de tout ce qu'il possède.'<sup>3</sup>

Rousseau is much more interested in the rights of the people than in the rights of man. Although sometimes he asserts the contrary, there can be no doubt that equality was more important in his opinion than liberty. In two points his social contract theory differs widely from the earlier type as represented in the works of Hobbes:<sup>4</sup> in Hobbes's theory the people conclude a

<sup>1</sup> *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, Seconde Partie.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *Contrat social*, livre i, chap. viii.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the valuable introduction to *The Social Contract* by G. D. H. Cole, Everyman ed.

mutual compact only in order at once to transfer their supreme power to the sovereign. In Rousseau's theory the will of the people, as the result of the mutual contract of individuals, is inalienable and not transferable. Further, Hobbes states that the sovereign is identical with the Government, Rousseau that the two are quite distinct, the Government acting only as the part-time agent of the sovereign. As the sovereign is identical with Rousseau's famous 'general will,' the former can only be represented by itself; the power may be transmitted, but not the will.

It is impossible in so contracted a survey to deal with the many detailed problems arising from this theory, but two points must be touched upon briefly. The first is the considerable power which the body politic possesses over the individual, the power of this equalitarian sovereign being little less than that of the absolutist sovereign of Hobbes. 'On convient que tout ce que chacun aliène, par le pacte social de sa puissance, de ses biens, de sa liberté, c'est seulement la partie de tout cela dont l'usage importe à la communauté; mais il faut convenir aussi que le souverain seul est juge de cette importance.'<sup>1</sup> It is also significant that, in contrast with Locke's and Montesquieu's, Rousseau's sovereignty is indivisible and combines legislative and executive power; this means a concentration of State power which found its nearest equivalent in reality in the Convention of the Jacobins during the French Revolution. Rousseau himself—to mention the second important point—by no means favours a parliamentary democracy. To him, as to Montesquieu, the value of the form of government is relative, each of the three main types of administration being in certain cases the best, and in others the worst. Monarchy is suitable only to wealthy nations; aristocracy to states of medium size and wealth; and democracy to states that are small and poor. The political ideal not only of Rousseau but also of later radical writers such as Morelly and Mably, was a small republic governed on traditional lines, where no great changes would take place and the constitution could be statically established. Geneva, Corsica, Andorra were their examples of the small state in which the voice

<sup>1</sup> *Contrat social*, livre II, chap. 17.

of the general will could be more easily heard than in large states like France or England. In effect it was rather Rousseau's general principles than his concrete political suggestions which contributed to the ideology of the mass movement towards equality which began in 1789 and characterized the nineteenth no less than the twentieth century. Only its later developments proved that Rousseau's idea of political equality was not sufficient and that the new problem of economic equality had to be approached by intellectual means less deductive and more adequate to the structure of existing society.

Finally, a word remains to be said about the historical approach of French enlightenment. It stands out in striking contrast to the theologically absolute historical philosophy of the seventeenth century, as embodied so expressively by Bossuet in his brilliantly written *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (Paris 1681), which is a mixture of Christian teleology, authoritarian State philosophy, and rationalistic thinking. The work is not in reality a comprehensive world-history, as its title would indicate, for it reconstructs the whole historic process somewhat obliquely and according to three factors—monarchy, Christ, and the Catholic Church. Individual epochs and cultural areas are not studied in themselves but are measured by these three categories. Greece and Rome represent merely the first steps towards the sovereignty of the Christian State and the Catholic Church: the era of Mohammed and the development of the east are therefore entirely neglected. Empire succeeds empire only *ad maiorem gloriam Dei*. God controls history, but (this is a characteristic concession to modern rationalist thought) He intervenes only indirectly in its course. He is represented by venerable temporal and spiritual institutions, which in the name of God may claim absolute obedience. All revolutions, civil and religious, are therefore denounced by Bossuet, and their denunciation is one of the chief objects of this book. Apart from a few special cases of divine intervention, Bossuet asserts that history is subject to the rational law of cause and effect: 'A la réserve de certains coups extraordinaires où Dieu voulut que sa main parût toute seule, il n'est point arrivé de grands changements qui n'avaient eu ses causes dans

les siècles précédens.’<sup>1</sup> History to him is explicable by the characters of kings, of great men, and of nations.

Bossuet, however, though apodictic is not narrow, though authoritarian is not therefore unjust. His chapters on antiquity are to-day still interesting and impressive, and his brilliant presentation of the early history of Rome undoubtedly influenced Montesquieu’s essay, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734). The great preacher has even some recognition for the religious emotions displayed in false religions; the advocate of absolute State power shows, too, a certain understanding for the patriotism of democratic republics.

Voltaire’s *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations* (1756), which, with his fascinating *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), constitutes his main historical work, is a complement and at the same time a deliberate antithesis to Bossuet’s book. For Voltaire begins where Bossuet ends—that is, with the German and Romance peoples of the time of Charlemagne. Voltaire is an admirer of Bossuet’s style though contemptuous of his basic conception of history. *Bourgeois* sentiment and the absolutist-theocratic interpretations of history inevitably cancelled one another out.

As in the case of all the *philosophes* Voltaire in his historical doctrine allows the power of reason and the idea of progress to usurp the places formerly held by Christian redemption and by Providence; the old division between sacred and profane history was definitely annihilated, and the tools of free criticism employed on political and religious institutions which for the absolutist historian had been sacrosanct. Where the older conception illustrated the struggle between the opposing forces of Christianity and paganism, the new portrayed the struggle between reason and unreason in world history. In Voltaire’s outline of history, facts are subject to the judgment of a leading idea.

Whereas to Bossuet ‘le roi, Jésus Christ, et l’Église’ were the three powers through which Providence revealed its intentions, to the *philosophes* the *bourgeoisie* was the decisive factor destined to bring about the victory of reason and prosperity. The *bourgeois* standpoint of these historians is the cause of their

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet, *Discours sur l’histoire universelle*, part iii, chap. ii.

aversion to a purely dynastic and ecclesiastical treatment of history; it characterizes no less their new interest in *mœurs* and *usages*, in the development of material welfare, and the stress is laid on the technical and economic achievements of the commoners since the decay of feudalism.

The new historians openly and with malice exposed political and ecclesiastical machinations to secure power, treating them as evils which had fortunately been partly overcome but still existed as a considerable danger. With the new self-confidence of the *bourgeoisie* came a widening of outlook. Voltaire, Turgot, Condorcet no longer regard history as subjects of a king, or as members of an infallible Church, but as rationalistic commoners. Voltaire includes a sketch of the Asiatic peoples in his historical survey. To him a 'universal history' which is silent about India and China suggests the limited outlook of peasants who praise their own village and know nothing of their capital. A reappraisal of historical values takes place. The Hebrews, formerly held up as exemplars and freely quoted, are now unmasked as mere barbarians; on the other hand, the culture and morals of the Chinese, overlooked for a long period, now become the subject of almost enthusiastic interest.

But this unfolding of new worlds was not yet an intensive and systematic one; it still lacked a clear conception of historical development and its numerous phases. None the less the French enlightenment was a step forward in the revelation of the riches of the historical world, and with the advent of Voltaire progressed beyond the naïve realism of mere facts. Selection, plasticity, and taste govern Voltaire's historical writings: 'La vie est trop courte, le temps trop précieux, pour dire des choses inutiles.'<sup>1</sup>

Brilliant as is Voltaire's description of the aesthetic-cultural aspect of historical development (particularly in his *Siècle de Louis XIV*), even for him, and still more for the Encyclopaedists and Condorcet, the historical process appeared as something comparatively simple. All these philosophers constructed a kind of hypothetical history in which, according to Benedetto Croce, 'priests deceive, courtiers intrigue, wise monarchs conceive and realize good institutions which are combated and rendered almost

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, chap. xcvi.



useless through the malignity of others and the ignorance of the people.'<sup>1</sup>

Voltaire's picture of the malice of priests and stupidity of laymen is neither unrealistic nor very optimistic in contrast with those of his successors in the same century. He regarded history largely as a pathology of mankind, as a chaotic disorder, 'un ramas de crime, de folies et de malheur.' This Frenchman reveals himself as a sceptical physician, shrewdly diagnosing the disease of human history and planning a therapy for the future without always himself believing in his patient's ultimate recovery. The disease he opined to arise from bad tradition and habit, differing in every country and age, and recovery could result only from fidelity to reason, *la raison universelle*, which is identical and invariable in all countries and at all times. History exhibits, in his estimation, no absolute continuous process to a more and more highly developed rationality, a *progressus ad infinitum*, as it were, but rather is like the ocean waves, with crests of progress and troughs of regress. He never doubted the constancy of the reasonable as well as of the unreasonable factors in history, but he conceded to the historical process a few outstanding isles of culture—those brilliant and comparatively happy epochs in which reason culminated to make life comfortable and interesting, such as the period of Pericles and Plato, the age of Caesar and Augustus, the Italian Renaissance, and, finally, the age of Louis XIV, perhaps, of all, that 'qui approche le plus de la perfection.' It was these oases which mainly attracted the rationalist and Epicurean of the eighteenth century. But even in the great periods there were in his judgment many shadows among the lights, for 'tous les siècles se ressembloient par la méchanceté des hommes.'

Hedonism and moral criticism are the main tendencies in these historical reflections. Voltaire studied the past, enjoyed the present, and looked forward to the future, on the one hand with hope, on the other with intense scepticism. But Condorcet—Voltaire's friend and biographer—was the first to display completely that aspect of progress so typical of the age of enlightenment, which later became indispensable in the outlook of the European Liberal *bourgeoisie*.

<sup>1</sup> B. Croce, *Theory and History of Historiography*, London 1921, p. 249.

Condorcet (1743-94), characteristically, started his career as a mathematician and secretary of the French *Académie des Sciences*. He took part in the Revolution as a member of the *Législative* and of the *Convent*. His *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* is typical of his own outlook, as of that of the eighteenth century as a whole. It was written in 1793 at Madame Vernay's retreat, where Condorcet, fearing Robespierre's executioners, had taken refuge. His flight, however, did not eventually save him, and in 1794 he became their victim. Yet his writings are free from pessimism: indeed, they are filled with a grand, buoyant confidence in the future.

Condorcet regarded the priesthood very much as pious Christians regarded the devil; in the place of the Christian saints he set the martyrs of learning, from Socrates to Galileo. We see in his work the mathematician's strictly uniform picture of history in contrast with the complex, if sometimes ambiguous, one of Voltaire. Condorcet was an idealist, a revolutionary, and a friend of the people; he was fascinated by the theory of the infinite perfectibility of human nature and his mind was saturated by those idealizations of republican romanticism which are also to be found in Rousseau and Mably. He regards history as an illuminant in the holy war of liberation against the powers of darkness and obscurantism. In this struggle between science and theology, the victory of free culture is to Condorcet a certainty. History is to him like a funicular which ascends from the valley to the mountain peak of civilization against tremendous obstacles, and which finally reaches the summit to give its passengers a marvellous view over the landscape of culture. Condorcet is a precursor of Positivism, with its maxim *savoir pour prévoir*.

Nine periods of history, from the prehistoric ages to the French Revolution, are broadly outlined. Condorcet acknowledges the moral idealism of the founders of Christianity, but the Middle Ages have no glamour for him. On the other hand, the world-embracing role played by Islam receives juster consideration. His account of the age of absolutism in which the struggle between *autorité* and *raison* is passionately fought out and the development of science gives the victory to reason has, indeed,

something of drama. A continuous exploration of the world by science keeps pace with a continuous liberation of the individual by the recognition and realization of his fundamental rights. Condorcet's outlook on the future also is positive. Society will become increasingly rationalized and equalitarian, the education of the people will make remarkable progress, and all wars will be outlawed. In the future man will want not merely the existence of a new generation but also its happiness. His faith in science leads the heroic philosopher to expect in a dimly envisaged future extended longevity for man and the progressive curtailment of the powers of death, and a sense of so grand a future consoles this noble mind for present chaos and for the ubiquitous petty passions of men.

## 2. FRANCE FROM 1789 TO 1815

### (a) THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution<sup>1</sup> was the result of State bankruptcy. It began with the summoning of the *États généraux* still on a monarchic basis, and was at first confined to a modification of structure in the existing system. It was undertaken as a movement of reform on a large scale, and step by step it developed into a radical revolution, directed by a small clique. It culminated in the terror of the Jacobin clubs and the Committees of Public Safety in Paris, and it ended with the *coup d'état* of Napoleon and the dictatorship of the 18th Brumaire. The rhythm of this revolution is, as a historian of this period has recently aptly said, a transfer of power 'from larger groups to smaller and more determined groups, each shock taking on more and more the aspect of a *coup d'état*, less and less that of a widespread spontaneous outbreak of the people.'<sup>1</sup>

The road from the States General and from the Constituent Assembly of 1789 via the Legislative of 1791 and the Convention of 1793 to the Directory of 1795, which ended with the *coup d'état* of 1799, was at once logical and illogical—logical because

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Brinton, *A Decade of Revolution, 1789-1799*, New York 1934, p. 1.

the development occurred along the lines marked out by Rousseau's doctrine of sovereignty which says that sovereignty is unitary, indivisible, and inalienable, but also illogical because in fact it jettisoned more and more the original idea of liberty, and achieved that of equality only in the political and not in the economic sphere.

The first phase of the Revolution was an attempt at reform within the existing political framework. This was the monarchical period of the Revolution, from 1789 to autumn 1791. The whole process began as a struggle of the *tiers état* against the privileged classes, of the *bourgeoisie* and peasantry against the nobility and clergy. It was, however, not markedly a quarrel of the people against the Crown. It is one of the ironies of history that not the *tiers état* but the privileged classes petitioned for the convocation of the *États généraux* in order to strengthen their position against the king. The *tiers état*, however, having been doubled by the king, eventually declared itself an *Assemblée nationale* representative of the whole nation, and invited members of the privileged Estates to join it. The majority of the clergy consisted of discontented *curés* with a grudge against the bishops who, together with an aristocratic minority, willingly attended the National Assembly. Too late the king ordered the other two Estates to join *in corpore*. Thus the *tiers état*, together with a third of the clergy and a sixth of the nobility, debated and passed the great reforms which definitely meant the end of the *ancien régime* and the victory of the *bourgeoisie* and peasants. The three well-known questions of the Abbé Sieyès, the leading spokesman in the National Assembly, show the new self-assertion of this class: 'Qu'est-ce que le tiers état? Tout. Qu'a-t-il été jusqu'à présent dans l'ordre politique? Rien. Que demandait-il? A être quelque chose.' The leaflet which begins with these words closes with this undisguised threat: 'Ne demandez point quelle place, enfin, des classes privilégiées doivent occuper dans l'ordre social; c'est demander quelle place on veut assigner dans le corps d'un malade à l'humeur maligne qui le mine et le tourmente. Il faut la neutraliser; il faut rétablir la santé et le jeu de tous les organes; . . . Mais on vous dit que vous n'êtes pas encore capable de supporter la santé; et vous écoutez cet aphorisme

de la sagesse aristocratique comme les peuples orientaux reçoivent les consolations du fatalisme! Restez donc malades.’<sup>1</sup>

During the famous night meeting of the Fourth of August a new social order was born: manorial revenues and judicial privileges were abolished without any compensation; the estates of the Church were ruthlessly confiscated at the suggestion of the versatile Bishop Talleyrand, to be used partly for the settlement of national debts and partly to distribute land to the peasants. Furthermore, all monasteries and religious orders were suspended; both education and marriage were made a concern of the State instead of the Church; the priests now became civil servants and had to take the oath of assent to the new social order.

Of the six hundred and twenty-one deputies to the National Assembly, a hundred and thirty were merchants, bankers, and men of independent means, fifteen were doctors, and only some forty were peasants or farmers, the majority consisting of three hundred lawyers from provincial towns—industrious people who had read their Voltaire and Rousseau with enthusiasm and combined a remarkable shrewdness and delight in definitions with a considerable lack of political experience.

In the National Assembly we find a small Right of legitimists which aimed at an aristocratic constitution, an unimportant Right Centre, and a large Left of the Feuillants, led by Lafayette, Mirabeau, and Sieyès, to whom a new political system was a matter of life and death. This Assembly drew up the Constitution of 1791, which covered a limited monarchy.

Following the model of Montesquieu, the legislative was now handed over to the Parliament, the entire executive remained with the king, whilst the juridical power was declared independent. Contrary to Montesquieu, however, there was only one Chamber. Actually the voting system, based on a census and on indirect procedure, was a tool of the propertied *bourgeoisie* and peasantry. All were citizens, but the four million proprietors were distinguished as *citoyens actifs* from the two millions of propertyless *citoyens passifs*. The executive remained in the hands of an irresponsible monarch and his responsible ministers. The king

<sup>1</sup> Abbé Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?* Nouv. éd., Paris 1822, p. 224.

possessed no legislative power and only a delaying, not an absolute, veto. But already the Republicans mockingly called him and his unpopular wife *Monsieur et Madame Vêto*, and the end of his influence was to be foreseen.

Debates on the constitution soon gave rise to a characteristic tension between the majority of ideologically minded lawyers and the ablest political realist who had appeared in France for years. Count Mirabeau the younger was socially an outsider and renegade, but as a writer and orator he was no less brilliant and original than the father who hated him so bitterly. The privileged classes disliked Mirabeau on account of his progressive ideas, the commoners distrusted him on account of his superior intelligence and the undeniable frivolity of his private life. When the breakdown of a social order occurs, adventurers always seize their opportunity. Undoubtedly Mirabeau was a bold adventurer, but he was more than this. The abstract systematic thought of *curés* and lawyers was as strange to him as were the optimistic illusions of courtiers and prelates. He was not *un citoyen politique*, but *un homme politique* (Barthou). He possessed the realism that was lacking in his opponents in the *tiers état* and he lacked the solid orderly morale upon which the latter prided themselves. Mirabeau preferred political solutions to political ideologies. Thus he wanted the Rights of Man to be connected with the drafting of the constitution and not, as the *Assemblée* eventually arranged it, to precede it. To this son of an ancient house the Revolution did not mean the commencement of a completely new society sprung from a fictitious 'state of nature.' 'Nous ne sommes point des sauvages arrivant des bords de l'Orénoque pour former une société. Nous sommes une nation vieille et sans doute trop vieille pour notre époque; nous avons un gouvernement préexistant, un roi préexistant, des préjugés préexistants. Il faut, autant qu'il est possible, assortir toutes ces choses à la révolution, et sauver la soudaineté du passage.'<sup>1</sup> Mirabeau demanded a strong constitutional kingdom and a two-chamber system. Not only, however, did the Assembly refuse to take the way of a monarchical revolution, but the king himself, whom Mirabeau secretly advised, paid for counsels which he did not follow. What the king

<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. Barthou, *Mirabeau*, Paris 1913, p. 177.

accepted was, as a matter of fact, eventually the Constitution of 1791.

With Mirabeau's untimely death in April 1791 the chance of a peaceful revolution, the idea of compromise between Crown and nation, came to an end. The *piano* of the *Assemblée constituante* was followed by the *forte* of the Legislative Assembly.

The new, complicated system of voting did not much attract the voters, and for the first time a political organization outside the National Assembly, the Jacobin clubs, exercised considerable pressure on voters as well as on candidates. The right wing of the *Assemblée constitutionnelle* disappeared altogether, its place being now taken by the former moderate left. The Feuillants, as well as the Republicans, who were in a majority, had their leaders outside the Assembly. The short-sighted king was more afraid of the Constitutionalists than of the hostile Jacobins. His secret negotiations with the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, who were much influenced by the French *émigrés* in Germany, gave rise to international revolutionary propaganda with the battle-cry of 'La guerre aux palais, la paix aux cabanes!' When the advance of the troops of the Coalition in the north and east resulted in the so-called September massacres, even Constitutionalists like Lafayette and Talleyrand left the country, and on 21st September the Convention voted the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. The trial and the execution of the king, and later of the queen and other members of the royal family, are well-known events.

Meanwhile the Legislative made an end of the domination of the propertied *bourgeoisie* and the revolutionary movement proceeded to further extremes. The Legislative introduced universal suffrage, which increased the influence of the masses, and summoned a National Convention to revise the constitution. In September 1792 the Convention met, and finally drew up the Constitution of the year III (1793). The third act of the great drama began. The new Convention was characterized by the deep division between Girondins and Montagnards. Not all the Girondins, as the name would suggest, came from the south, yet they were not a political party in the modern sense of the word. They were characterized by a common attitude; they

were democrats in theory but aristocrats in conduct and outlook. 'Les Girondins furent perdus par leur aristocratie d'attitude, de goûts, presque d'épiderme' (Aulard). They regarded themselves as representatives and not, like the Jacobins, as delegates of the people. They were the voice of the upper middle class, of well-to-do business men and bankers, upholders of private property, supporters of decentralization. They understood ideas better than men, and, moreover, had no outstanding original leaders such as the Jacobins possessed in Danton, Robespierre, and Marat. The Jacobins were backed by the masses in Paris, the Girondins by the provinces. The Girondins wanted juridical equality, whereas the Montagnards desired social equality. The Montagnards proclaimed the rights of labour and the Girondins withstood them in the interests of their class. Under pressure of the war, and the lack of commodities in Paris, the Jacobins won the battle through the machinery of their clubs. The constitutional Republic was succeeded by a revolutionary Government in Paris. The defeat and treachery of General Dumouriez served as a pretext, for the methods of the Jacobins had some resemblance to those of the Stalinists in Russia to-day. The Girondins were accused of participating in this treachery, were dragged by the mob from the Convention, and the majority of them executed after trial before a revolutionary tribunal. Whereas the Jacobins were men of 'half a practical, half a fanatical type' (Elton), the politics of the Girondins were, according to Michelet, 'vacillating and clumsy.'

The nation was now the sovereign and all power was concentrated in the Convention. The voice of the Convention was the voice of the *volonté générale*. Instead of division of power, local autonomy, and a franchise based on property, there was now direct and universal suffrage and a centralized government. These were no less the result of the need for national defence against an external enemy than of the logical rigorism of the *doctrine révolutionnaire*. The Convention sent *représentants en mission* and promoted local Jacobin clubs all over the country. But in practice the Constitution of 1793 was soon suspended. The Convention could only exercise its indivisible powers through committees. The *Comité de Salut public*, backed by



the meeting of the *sections*, really ruled France. It was supported by *comités de surveillance*, organizations for the denunciation and prosecution of all suspected persons, i.e. of aristocrats, priests, as well as Constituants and moderate Republicans. The fact that the Girondins had appealed unsuccessfully to the provinces gave a pretext to the revolutionary Government to denounce them as *fédéralistes*.

The prestige of the democratic dictatorship was extraordinarily increased through the introduction of conscription. Carnot's appeal to the *levée en masse* resulted in the volunteer armies of 1793. Their remarkable fighting spirit can only be understood if one bears in mind that here for the first time the French people were defending their own interests. For the first time nobody was allowed to hire a substitute, the whole country became one vast camp, and 'modern democratic war had begun in earnest' (Brinton). Lack of food, lack of work, and the rise in prices led to State interference in economic matters also. As early as 1789 paper money (*assignats*) had been issued on the basis of the nationalized property of the Church. Now these *assignats* could only be maintained with the help of maximum food prices. These maximum prices were a blow struck by the lower middle classes at the upper middle classes, the force of which was increased by a decree against luxury and by plans for the distribution of the land. The more radical a revolution becomes, the more doctrinaires gain upon humanists, the more upholders of principles prevail over men with common sense and sympathy with others. Mirabeau could still recognize the human being in the opponent of his ideas, but Robespierre saw only the opponent of his ideas in the human being.

The figures of Danton and Robespierre are even to-day subjects of controversy amongst historians. Professor Aulard, a typical citizen of the Third Republic and a Radical - Socialist, exalts Danton at the expense of Robespierre, whereas his former pupil, the Socialist Matthiez, 'reveals' Danton's moral inferiority and restores the moralist Robespierre to the circle of heroes. A brilliant speaker and a passionate fighter, Danton was even more devoted to free love than to unfree hatred. Like Mirabeau, he valued action according to the facts of a situation more than

action according to principle. This lover of mankind and of liberty never quite understood why human beings should kill one another for the sake of an ideology. But Robespierre was a cold Puritan, who hated all cynicism and all *savoir-vivre*. Robespierre had begun as a successful provincial lawyer and had early displayed much interest in literature and philanthropy. As representative of Artois, he already showed a radical attitude in the *États généraux*. But he rose to eminence mainly through the Jacobin Club. His recent biographer, P. Rohden, remarks aptly of him: 'All his opponents—Feuillants, Girondins, Enragés, Indulgents—in the course of their careers lost contact with the Club which had been the brain and heart of the Revolution for five years, thereby revealing themselves as "false revolutionaries." Robespierre alone remained faithful to the Club till the last, and the Club remained faithful to him; circumstances made of the "Incorruptible" the Jacobin *par excellence*.'<sup>1</sup> Robespierre honestly defended the dictatorship of the Jacobins and was pedantically convinced that virtue would always be in a minority. He regarded himself and his co-workers as an ethical *élite* and appeared on the platform with all the self-confidence of the preacher of some religious sect. It is quite obvious that men such as Robespierre and his friends could not but hate the competing group of the 'citrevolutionaries.' These Dantonists consisted of unscrupulous opportunists, political adventurers, bankers, army contractors, and journalists. On Robespierre's side were some excellent brains, and such hard-working men as Couthon and Saint-Just, inspired by the idea of a democratic republic.

The revolutionary committees acted no less tyrannically than the courts of the *ancien régime*. Anybody might be summoned before the revolutionary tribunal, and no lawyer would assist the accused. It was by this system that Robespierre destroyed the opposition groups. With great skill he played off Danton's more moderate Indulgents against the radical Hébertists, the champions of the 'man in the street.' The Hébertists' fanatical hatred of religion was regarded as a nuisance by the Jacobins, who after a short period of the deification of Reason worshipped

<sup>1</sup> P. P. Rohden, *Robespierre*, Berlin 1935, p. 491.

an *Être suprême* with a special revolutionary rite. The *Comité de Salut public* realized that its various opponents had something in common in their corrupt morale. But the reckless massacres in the name of sacred principles eventually produced terror, disgust, and a desire for security on the part of the masses. There was at the time of Robespierre a cartoon showing the tribune decapitating the last remaining Frenchman—namely, the hangman himself! But the hangman was clever enough to avoid this fate, for Robespierre fell on 9th January 1793. The enemies of Robespierre were to be found in the two central Committees as well as amongst the representatives *en mission* who travelled the country and recognized the growing opposition. The real victors were the capitalists, the revolution-mongers and army purveyors, who forced the new rulers to do away at once with the Socialist policy of maximum prices. The *jeunesse dorée*, who came from the few well-to-do middle-class families, now hunted the Jacobins in the streets of Paris just as formerly the Jacobins had hunted their families. It was not by chance that the property franchise was reintroduced by the Constitution of 1795, which arranged for a Directory of five and for a two-chamber system. Only one important institution of the revolutionary period remained, and this was due to the pressure of a foreign foe: the national army—a weapon by which the republic maintained itself externally, but which was ultimately to destroy it internally.

(b) THE LEGACY OF THE REVOLUTION

What did the famous revolutionary ideas of 1789, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, really mean? And how far were they materialized by the dynamic process of the ten years from 1789 to 1799?

The theoretic part of the *Droits de l'homme et du citoyen* of 1789 was influenced by the American Constitution as well as by Rousseau, whilst in its historical part much was borrowed from the ideas of Montesquieu. Its opening paragraph states plainly that 'les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits.' The second paragraph makes the connection with the

Rights of Man: 'Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme. Ces droits sont: la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté et la résistance à l'oppression.'

Liberty of thought and of action, and security of property—these are the two fundamental aims of the French *bourgeoisie*. According to § 11 'la libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme.' The problem of this constitution lies in an element of contradiction between liberty of property and equality. Equality means, above all, equality of rights. Every one is a citizen and every one has a right to be appointed to public posts and functions. It is an undeniable achievement of the French Revolution that it did bring about this equality of political rights. But the discussions in the National Assembly on the position of hitherto inferior religious or racial minorities make it evident that the limits of a purely juridical equality had not been much transgressed. On the Fourth of August serfdom was abolished and the Protestants, who under the old regime had possessed only civic rights, were also granted religious liberty. After a heated discussion which showed a somewhat anti-Semitic tendency, civic rights were given to Jews if they were prepared to take the civic oath. The proposed abolition of slavery in the colonies met with still stronger opposition. In vain did the *Amis des Noirs* plead for it. Only the mulattoes were granted political rights, and only a small proportion of them received citizen rights. The economic interests of the French colonists and the Assembly's fear of going too far with reform were decisive. In the interest of the colonies and in accordance with public opinion slavery was maintained. 'Dans la lutte entre les principes et les réalités les réalités furent les plus fortes.'<sup>1</sup> In any case the Assembly could have justified its decision by a paragraph from the *Droits de l'homme*: 'Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l'utilité publique.'

The fundamental idea of *fraternité* was that all men are united in the service of a single great purpose: Fraternity is the child of

<sup>1</sup> E. Lavisse and P. Sagnac, *Histoire de France contemporaine*, Paris 1920, vol. i, p. 125.

parents called Liberty and Equality. In practice it meant, first of all, fraternization between the free and equal people of France. That, for instance, is the idea aimed at in a series of questions and answers between teacher and pupils contained in a Republican school-book for the training of the citizen.

'D. Qui es-tu?

'R. Je suis un enfant de la patrie.

'D. Quelles sont tes richesses?

'R. La liberté, l'égalité.

'D. Qu'apportes-tu dans la société?

'R. Un cœur pour aimer mon pays et des bras pour le défendre.'<sup>1</sup>

Fraternity reduces social barriers; moreover, it reduces the distance between human beings. There is a striking change in manners. The *vous* between parents and children, between masters and labourers, between householders and their servants, is replaced by the more intimate *tu*. *Citoyen* and *citoyenne* take the place of *Monsieur* and *Madame*. A philosophic patriot suggested in the *Annales patriotiques*, July 1790: 'Que ces phrases: j'ai, j'aurai, j'ai eu l'honneur, vous me ferez l'honneur, soient bannies du style épistolaire ou de conversation et que la finale des lettres ainsi que les adieux vocaux, qui se termine ordinairement par la très plate et très insignifiante parole: votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur, se termine simplement par un bonjour, un bonsoir, ou bien par les mots: Je suis votre concitoyen, votre frère, votre ami, votre camarade, votre égal.'<sup>2</sup> Fraternity, however, changed its meaning somewhat in the course of the Revolution. In 1789 the American and English flags were run up beside the French one on the 'Tree of Liberty.' But in 1793 and 1794, under pressure of foreign invasion, only the tricolour was to be seen. Fraternity between all human beings changed to fraternity between Frenchmen only. The latter found expression in a multitude of revolutionary symbols. There were the *autels de la patrie*, i.e. stone blocks inscribed with moral aphorisms, on village greens; there were the scales of justice, the crossed hands, the lion, the cock on a cannon; there was, further, the ardent

<sup>1</sup> E. and J. de Goncourt, *Histoire de la société française pendant la Révolution*, Paris 1889, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 327.

worship of revolutionary heroes and the solemn exhibition of their pictures, imitating and at the same time replacing the cults of the Catholic Church.

Fraternity flourishes only in an exalted and solemn mood. Therefore the more radical the Revolution became, the more its political language developed a quasi-religious style. A kind of reformation of the ancient cult of the Catholic Church took place. *La sainte égalité, la sainte liberté, les droits sacrés de l'homme* were much used expressions. In place of the Holy Trinity was set up the martyr trinity of Marat, Lepelletier, and Châlier. And was not the solemn delivery of Marat's heart to the Convention only an imitation of the Catholic cult of the Sacred Heart? It was by no means a weakness in Jacobinism that it produced a cult, a creed, a moral code. Brinton, who has examined its structure sociologically in a penetrating study,<sup>1</sup> characterizes its struggle with its enemies as 'a religious war, not a class struggle.' As a matter of fact, the Jacobin attitude was a mixture of puritanism, sentimentality, and pseudo-classicism. The Jacobins, like every dogmatic group, not only condemned the immorality of their enemies but regulated the conduct proper to its own members. There were tests which each member of a club had to pass to prove his or her orthodoxy, either before a single judge or a small jury. It was significant that a Jacobin club in the provinces suggested having two separate local cemeteries, 'one for good and one for bad citizens.'

But in one important point the revolutionary temperament of these French Puritans differed from that of the English Puritans. The latter banned festivals, but the former encouraged them. Like all orthodox political systems Jacobinism needed *fêtes* to increase its prestige and to propagate its slogans. It held festivals of right-mindedness and virtue. As Robespierre made the worship of the *Être suprême* follow the cult of reason the new cult of ideas counted no fewer than thirty-six festivals. The Jacobin calendar included festivals dedicated to the Supreme Being, to mankind, to the French nation, to the benefactors of mankind, to the martyrs of liberty, to liberty and equality, to the hatred of tyrants and traitors, to truth, to justice, to glory

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Brinton, *The Jacobins*, New York 1930.

and immortality, to friendship, to frugality, to good faith, to heroism, to unselfishness, to stoicism, to good fortune and bad fortune, to conjugal faithfulness and maternal tenderness, to childhood, youth, and old age, to agriculture and industry, to forefathers and to posterity.

The same moral fervour which characterized the Jacobins in Paris displayed itself also after the 9th of Thermidor in the reaction against them. When after many years the *bourgeois* and the private person re-emerged from the *citoyen* and the patriot, there still remained the old habit of moral denunciation of an opponent. The titles of leaflets and of newspaper articles under the Directory were typical of this: '*Le cri de la vengeance ou l'alleluia des honnêtes gens; Donnez-nous leurs têtes ou prenez les nôtres; Les crimes des Jacobins; Les Jacobins aristocrates, fédéralistes et contre-révolutionnaires*'.<sup>1</sup> One might truly say that even the *esprit français*, the famous French irony, had not escaped the scaffold. For the white terror against the Jacobins was no less terrible than the red had been. After the fall of Robespierre the law of maximum prices was suspended, but the ever-increasing numbers of *assignats* depreciated, thereby causing widespread impoverishment both in Paris and in the provinces, especially among officials and *rentiers*. As H. Sée has pointed out, the State would have gone completely bankrupt but for the victories of the armies which to some extent refilled its empty coffers.

When the pressure of the old system ceased a wild zest for life took the place of puritanism, a complete libertinism that of the enforced restrictions. La France 'danse pour se venger, elle danse pour oublier! C'est le dieu Vestris qui succède au dieu Marat! On danse sur les larmes, on danse sur ses deuils! On danse entre fils et filles des guillotins.'<sup>2</sup> Prostitution and gambling, strictly forbidden under Robespierre, now *bien* raised their heads again.

The real victors were the capitalists, the army surveyors, generals, and deputies, whose often corrupt dealings led to an accumulation of capital and so to a new start of industry and

<sup>1</sup> See the list of anti-Jacobinic pamphlets in E. and J. de Goncourt, *Histoire de la société française pendant le Directoire*, 2nd ed., Paris 1855, p. 118 f.

<sup>2</sup> E. and J. de Goncourt, *ibid.* pp. 140-3.

trade. According to Mathiez the 'robberies' under the Directory prepared the way for industrial growth under the Consulate and the Empire. The Directory was based on the Constitution of the year III, which re-established by the system of property franchise the domination of the propertied middle class and steered a middle course between the democratic aspirations of the Jacobins and the royalist restoration advocated by the *émigrés*. In vain had Babeuf regarded the Revolution as a war 'between the patricians and the plebeians, between the rich and the poor.' His revolt for the sake of a Socialist society and the nationalization of property was easily defeated. As the suffrage was dependent on the payment of direct taxes, labourers in town and country could not vote. About one and a half to two million voters out of about seven million were deprived of all political influence by it. In the speech with which Boissy d'Anglas introduced the Constitution of the year III as reporter to the Convention, he finds the best men to rule France mainly amongst the owners of property, and glosses Rousseau's theory of the state of nature and the civilized state in a remarkable way. 'A country,' he says,<sup>1</sup> 'governed by property owners is a true civil society [*est dans l'ordre civil*]; one where men without property govern is in a state of nature.'

Correspondingly, only those people who possessed land with a certain annual income could become members of the Assemblies which chose the national legislature and the higher local officials. The executive consisted of five directors chosen by the Council of Elders from a list of five hundred drawn by the Council. Every year a director was replaced. The four directors were respectable *bourgeois* and Republicans who tried to hold a middle course amidst the revolts of extremists on both sides. Whilst the executive and the legislative quarrelled with one another, a new and independent force was rising which was soon to outwit them both, and it was the army that became the decisive factor. Against the internal revolts which took place nearly every two years, the Directory was only able to maintain itself with the help of the victories of the generals Hoche and Bonaparte. This

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. J. Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, London 1936, p. 230.



meant a considerable rise in the prestige of the generals; the time was ripe for a military dictatorship.

Napoleon's brilliant career as soldier and statesman can be explained only by a coincidence of personality and situation, of genius and task. The young Corsican officer not only despised kings, aristocrats, and priests, but was also, as has been shown by recent research, much under the influence of Rousseau's *Contrat social*. But he interpreted this classic in his own way. He obtained from it the idea that the individual should of necessity identify himself with the general will and that a strong State power was indispensable. A treatise by the twenty-one-year-old officer, the so-called *Discours de Lyon*, shows strikingly the mentality of the Corsican who later expressed his contempt for political doctrinaires and *beaux esprits*, for men such as Benjamin Constant and women like Madame de Staël. His is the stoical attitude: 'Dans le courage, dans la force, consiste la vertu. L'énergie est la vie de l'âme, comme le principal ressort de la raison. Le Spartiate vivait d'une manière conforme à son organisation, il était heureux.'<sup>1</sup> And he advises youth: 'Sois homme, mais sois-le vraiment: vis maître de toi; sans force, mon fils, il n'est ni vertu ni bonheur.' After the fanatic verbosity of the revolutionaries Napoleon's idea of man is somewhat disillusioning. Man to him is not a champion of abstract ideas but an *ensemble* of natural forces: 'Il faut donc manger, dormir, engendrer, sentir, raisonner, pour vivre en homme; dès lors pour être heureux.' The Committees of 1793 had identified the sovereignty of the nation with the absolutism of a majority, but Napoleon interpreted it as the plebiscitarian dictatorship of an individual. The superiority of a parliamentary legislative was now replaced by the controlling power of a plebiscitary executive. For the Constitution of 1799 aimed, like every strong central power, at weakening the legislative. It is true that the general right to vote was reintroduced and that the property franchise of 1793 was suspended, but the voting system was deliberately made complex, the number of candidates was disproportionate, and the two Chambers were both powerless, for the one could only

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Discours de Napoléon*, publié par le Général Gourgaud, Paris 1826, pp. 11-23.

discuss measures suggested by the Government without taking any decision, while the other could only accept or refuse measures without any discussion of them. Later the Senate became the proper embodiment of the legislative, but Napoleon controlled it completely by his right to fix the lists of its members and to make additional appointments.

It was Napoleon who introduced the modern technique of the plebiscite, revived later by his nephew and by the dictators of the present day. Napoleon held, as the Abbé Sieyès has explained, that confidence should come from below, authority from above. In this way he had himself elected First Consul in 1802, Emperor in 1803. The commissary of the nation became more and more a personal dictator. H. E. Friedrich, in a valuable little book, *Napoleon I., Idee und Staat* (Berlin 1936), has rightly pointed out the democratic basic structure of Napoleon's regime. In spite of all setbacks the revolutionary heritage could not be destroyed. As a matter of fact, Napoleon acted rather as the executor of the Revolution than as its conqueror. As a dictator he could allow only a limited liberty to the individual and interference in private life was no less great than it is under modern dictatorships. *Émigrés* served in his household, in the Senate, and in the army, whilst former Girondins and Jacobins became members of the State Council and of the Councils of the provinces. But Napoleon made skilful concessions to the revolutionary ideas, as, for instance, in juridical procedure. He kept for himself the right of appointing judges, but he did not touch the security of tenure of the judicial office. People had become tired of the eternal struggles between emigrants, Girondins, and Jacobins. Napoleon used them all and in this way actually closed the volcano of the Revolution. He tolerated no interference with his policy, but he did, after all, make 'life safe and easy for the ordinary householder.'<sup>1</sup> The catchword of 'equality' was used by Napoleon as a means of propaganda during his foreign campaigns. To the Venetians he brought liberation from the Habsburgs, to the Egyptians freedom from the domination of the Mamelukes. As a realist he faced historical facts and traditions; he did not seek to eliminate them but used

<sup>1</sup> H. A. L. Fisher, *Bonapartism*, London 1913, p. 47.

them for his constructive planning. In contrast to the fanaticism of the Jacobins, he regarded both religion and nationalities in the Machiavellian manner as means to his end. Napoleon's democracy was the democracy of chances for able and loyal men to rise within the system of a Caesar, and every soldier was said to carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack. In administration Napoleon was skilful and successful. He continued the centralistic tradition of the *ancien régime*, but he did so with much greater efficiency. In 1799 forty-five out of the fifty-nine departments had been 'in a state of chronic civil war' and the corruption of an overlarge bureaucracy was limitless. The chaos of the Directory gave place to a vigorous public order.

Bonaparte recognized, with the shrewd glance of the foreigner, that honour and glory were more important to the Frenchman than liberty and equality. Then, as to-day, Caesarism deliberately imitated the Roman model. The emperor appeared, like Caesar, with the laurel wreath, and the eagle became his emblem. Also the efficient system of organization was similar to the Roman system, for the prefect who ruled a *département*, the sub-prefect who was head of an *arrondissement*, and the mayors in the cities, were all dependent on their superior master but free in ruling their subordinates. Again the famous *Code civile* represents an amalgamation of Roman law with the results of the Revolution. In intellectual life Latinism and classicism prevailed. In the public schools humanitarian ideology was banned. The mind of the young Frenchman was to be trained only by Latin and mathematics. In art the rococo gave way to the monumental Empire style. Napoleon offered *panem et circenses*; his system successfully appealed to the masses. 'It must strike the imagination of material and prosaic men by its roads and canals, its avenues and streets, its harbour, bridges, and forts' (Fisher).

The centralized Government controlled every sphere of public life. Napoleon abolished the difference of parties, just as the modern dictatorships claim to overcome the difference of classes. The power of the family was increased, the paternal authority emphasized, the inferiority of woman stressed. The education of the masses was neglected, for Napoleon had no wish to train up potential enemies. This Caesar, who had once been an

enthusiast for *Werther*, interfered ruthlessly in the sphere of culture: morals, religion, education, public opinion were all subject to his control. Only a few newspapers were permitted and these were strictly censored. Literary criticism was forbidden. Important authors were prosecuted. Poetry kept silent. Madame de Staël, the daughter of Necker, had to leave France and live in exile abroad. Chateaubriand, who had dedicated the first volume of his spirited *Génie du Christianisme* to the Corsican, came into conflict with him after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, of which he disapproved, and consequently his review *Le Genre* was suppressed.

The immense power of the State police reduced the security of the individual to a minimum. In spite of this the *Code civile* of 1801, which was the outcome of eleven years of consideration, represented an advance in comparison with the *ancien régime*. It had a juridical as well as a social significance. Punishment increased in severity and many, though not all, humanitarian ideas were eliminated. To capital punishment (which the Revolution, too, had not abolished) the confiscation of goods was added. Oppositional political doctrines and intrigues involved deportation for life. The social function of the Code was to confirm the victory of the *bourgeoisie*, and to strengthen the social position of the well-to-do merchants and peasants. It supported capital by giving its representatives a majority. The Constitution of 1789 had suspended the guild system and had introduced free competition between masters, but the *Code civile* subordinated the rights of the workmen to those of the masters. Property owners had the law on their side, but the propertyless were strictly denied any possibility of union for common action.

The important regulation of relations between State and Church by the Concordat of 1801 can only be touched upon here. The *constitution civile du clergé* of 1790 had proved in many respects a failure, whilst the separation of Church and State was the expression of a period of terror. Napoleon treated the problem in a realistic manner. He recognized the Church as a factor indispensable for the lower classes and therefore as a weapon in the hand of the Government. The new pact not only bridged the former gap between priests and revolutionists but also

involved the tacit assent of the Pope to the confiscations of Church land under the Revolution. The Church might not, in future, acquire landed property, but the State provided small salaries for the clergy. Religion was an instrument of policy to Napoleon. The *curé*, like the teacher, was to regard himself less as the missionary of Christ than of Napoleon. The clergyman 'was expected to advocate conscription from the pulpit, to read out the army bulletins, and to inculcate veneration for the person of the Emperor' (Fisher).

Perhaps the extraordinary achievements as well as the cool calculations of Napoleon were never better displayed than during the Hundred Days, in 1815, when Liberals, artisans, and labourers were seen to prefer a moderate Napoleon to the reactionary wiles of the Bourbons and the *émigrés*. Here again Napoleon understood the new mental climate. In 1799 he had asked that gifted revolutionary Sieyès to draw up a constitution. In 1815 he suggested that a typical Liberal, Benjamin Constant, should do the same. Once more the property franchise was abolished, the number of deputies was increased, the freedom of the press and the independence of the judges were guaranteed. There were strong doubts about the sincerity of these concessions, but at least one result of French development during these dramatic twenty-five years can be traced to them. The idea of a constitution and the participation of the masses in the government were carried through, and the doctrine of a national mass-democracy was inevitable.

In a remarkable memorandum which the prisoner of St Helena wrote in self-justification as well as for propaganda purposes Napoleon discusses some criticisms of his work which a future historian might perhaps raise.<sup>1</sup> Against the reproach of despotism he advances the necessity for a dictatorship; against the accusation of a lust for war, he argues that he was always being attacked. He concedes only the allegation of ambition. 'Enfin, sera-ce mon ambition? Ah! sans doute, il m'en trouvera, et beaucoup; mais de la plus grande et de la plus haute qui fût peut-être jamais: celle d'établir, de consacrer enfin l'empire de la raison et la pleine exercice, l'entière jouissance des facultés humaines.'

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon I, *Messages et discours politiques*, p. 229 f.

Even the man who had once wrestled with ideologues and theorists could not completely renounce the French tradition of enlightenment. *L'empire de la raison!* It had been the idea of both Danton and Robespierre, an idea which, despite much opposition and still more disillusionment during the nineteenth century, was to prove itself so strong that even in present-day France it is *more* than an idea, it is a tendency, a motive, a form of life, which belongs to the permanent basis of France and will undoubtedly continue to belong to it in the future.

### 3. FRANCE SINCE 1815

#### (a) ENRICHISSEZ-VOUS!

The French Revolution was a major operation on the social body of France, and the scar is still visible to-day. The revolutionary heritage is *les deux France*, Catholicism and monarchy, the forces of the counter-revolution on the one side, those of revolutionary tradition and liberty of thought on the other. At first the middle classes backed the revolutionary settlement and took the lead in the victories of 1830 and 1848. But after that year fear of the 'red' proletarian wave caused them to change their front, and they supported Napoleon III. From 1870, after the fall of the monarchy, the *bourgeoisie* has taken up a position between the main camps which may be called somewhat paradoxically that of a conservative Republicanism.

French history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been simultaneously a battle for or against the power of the Catholic Church, for or against the *Weltanschauung* of the free-thinkers, for or against the *idée laïque*. For amidst the vicissitudes of modern development the Church has never lost its vigour and is still to-day, if not the only, at least the only important religious body in France.

It was not astonishing that the clergy who had been persecuted during the Revolution and had been misused by Napoleon for worldly purposes should subsequently completely identify themselves with the counter-revolutionary system. Its theorists,

Bonald and de Maistre, accordingly stress again and again the unity of State and Church, the doctrine of the divine mission of the French monarchy. It was the old missionary French idea which Bossuet had already championed and which was now vigorously revived. 'Chaque nation,' says Joseph de Maistre in the chapter 'Conjectures sur les voies de la Providence dans la Révolution française' of his famous *Considérations sur la France*, 'a reçu une mission qu'elle doit remplir. La France exerce sur l'Europe une véritable magistrature, qu'il serait inutile de contester, dont elle a abusé de la manière la plus coupable. Elle était surtout à la tête du système religieux, et ce n'est pas sans raison que son Roi s'appelait *très chrétien*.' <sup>1</sup>

The ideology of the authority of the Church and of the Christian State was based on a pessimistic theory of human nature. After the violence and brutality of the Revolution and the Empire, the gospel of Rousseau that 'Man is good, if he is natural' had completely lost its powers of attraction. 'Nos philosophes veulent,' Bonald proclaimed, 'que l'homme naisse bon et que la société se forme par intérêt et pour accroître la somme de ses jouissances.' <sup>2</sup> This optimism had proved to be unjustified. Man, according to the experience of the revolutionary age, seemed *a priori* evil, and society a kind of a house of correction to tame his wicked instincts. 'L'homme naît avec des penchants mauvais, et la société se forme par nécessité et pour empêcher la destruction de l'homme.' <sup>3</sup> Rousseau had stressed the goodness of the state of nature and the wickedness of society. The philosophy of the Restoration took the opposite view. 'Nous sommes mauvais par nature, bons par la société.' It was the task of State and Church to regulate the behaviour of men in this sense. Instead of the antithesis between the *état naturel* and the *état social* which was accepted in the Enlightenment there was now a mystical juggling with the doctrine of the Trinity in which the Universe was made to represent a trinity of God, priest, and mankind, the Church one of Pope, priest, and layman, and the State (last but

<sup>1</sup> Joseph de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France*, éd. par R. Johannet et F. Vermale, Paris 1936, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Bonald, éd. P. Bourget et M. Salomon, *La Pensée chrétienne*, textes et études, Paris n.d., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

not least) one of king, noble, and people. With a touch of malice Bonald correlates atheism with anarchy, deism with constitutional monarchy, and theism with absolutist monarchy.

Louis XVIII intended, indeed, to pursue at first a moderate course, and granted a constitutional regime through the *charte* of 1815. But the counter-influence of the clergy soon made itself felt in a very aggressive manner. Experience of exile had brought about a new union between nobility and clergy, and the group of ultramontanes now launched a virulent campaign against atheism and immorality. The State was backed by the *congrégations*, affiliated to the Jesuits, which deftly incited the religious passions of the people. Whereas formerly Napoleon had exploited the clergy, now the clergy in their turn had learned the lesson and after 1815 were well able to use the apparatus of government for ecclesiastical purposes. The type of university created by Napoleon, with its quasi-military discipline and its strict hierarchy, was put under a Grand Master and employed in propaganda for the Catholic religion instead of in fostering the Napoleonic legend. It was the general longing for peace after the many years of the Revolution and of crisis from which the Church profited; for it seemed easier to tolerate an ecclesiastical dictatorship than a Jacobin or imperial one. 'I prefer royalist fanaticism to Jacobinism,' said the Duc de Richelieu, Louis XVIII's prime minister.

Charles X boldly reintroduced the medieval custom of consecration, and indulged in dreams of the divine right of kings. In 1826 the minister for ecclesiastical affairs admitted that the Government had long since secretly conceded the return of the Jesuits and their teaching in seminaries. The anxious protests of the Liberal opposition were answered by a drastic press law which even Chateaubriand, the elegant champion of the beauties of the Church, now called in the Upper House a law of barbarism. The middle classes clung obstinately to a Liberal tradition. The very men whom Napoleon had scoffed at as ideologues now energetically displayed the banner of Liberal ideology. People like Benjamin Constant and Royer-Collard had hoped, after the return of the Bourbons, to fit the new Liberal ideas into the framework of the old monarchy. But their hopes had been



badly disappointed; it took fifteen years of often ruthless reaction to carry into effect a system of the middle classes, a regime of the *juste milieu*. The July Revolution made it clear that a restoration of the *ancien régime* had become for ever impossible. From an economic point of view the year 1830 meant the victory of industrial capitalism over the landowners, of the well-to-do *bourgeoisie* over aristocracy and clergy. The visible results of this revolt were small, yet it was symptomatic that the new king called himself *roi des Français* instead of *roi de France*. He should rather have called himself *roi de la Bourgeoisie*. Thiers, who was to play a decisive role for more than forty years as a spokesman of Liberalism, truly characterized the Revolution as a triumph 'du grand principe de la déférence au vœu de la majorité des Chambres'; but he added that the nation which elected these Chambers was 'la nation consultée, non en masse, mais successivement dans la personne des électeurs, des députés, des pairs qui tous en représentent l'élite.'<sup>1</sup> The *bourgeoisie* of 1830 was as far from inviting the masses to join in the government as had been the *tiers état* of 1791. Before 1816 the *bourgeoisie* had already succeeded in establishing a suffrage limited according to a property qualification. The Constitution of 1830 reverted to this system of property franchise. When Louis-Philippe, the *bourgeois* king, strolled genially with umbrella and top-hat through the streets of Paris, he perfectly understood the new commercial trend which could be felt in all spheres. This man was representative of the *juste milieu* which was very remote from any bold and original bias, from any heroic ideals. Guizot surely knew nothing of the melancholy, the philosophic doubts, of a romanticist such as Chateaubriand, for all this rather shallow politician and historian desired were 'des mesures modérées appliquées par des hommes énergiques.' He sought always to mediate: between king and *bourgeoisie*, between reason and tradition, between philosophy and creed, between Catholic and Protestant. 'Il faisait ou voulait faire,' Faguet has aptly said of him, 'de catholiques, protestants et philosophes spiritualistes, une coalition analogue à la coalition de 1838, composée de centre droit, centre gauche et gauche dynastique. Il croyait ou voulait croire qu'un mouvement reli-

<sup>1</sup> E. Lavisse and S. Charlét, *Histoire de France contemporaine*, vol. v, p. 5 f.

gieux peut être un manœuvre.’<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that Guizot tried to prove the superiority of the middle classes: ‘L’homme des classes moyennes dirige la société, parce que c’est lui qui fait l’opinion.’<sup>2</sup> Yet why—we may well ask—do the *middle classes* make public opinion? Guizot provides us with an answer: ‘Parce que la classe inférieure ne sait que sentir et ne sait point parler, parce que la classe supérieure qui sait parler est trop loin de tout le monde pour connaître ce qu’il veut et pour s’inspirer de ce qu’il sent.’<sup>3</sup>

Guizot was not reluctant to give to Parliament the catchword of his system—*Enrichissez-vous!* Politics and literature became a matter of bargaining like industry and trade. Perhaps no one has seen through the tricks of this system better than Alexis de Tocqueville. For many years this lonely thinker and man of the world was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and for a short time in 1849 he was a minister. The middle classes, he observed, ruled everything: ‘Esprit actif, industrieux, souvent déshonnête, généralement rangé, téméraire quelquefois par vanité et par égoïsme, timide par tempérament, modéré en toute chose, excepté dans le goût du bien-être, et médiocre; . . . la classe moyenne, devenue le gouvernement, prit un air d’industrie privée.’<sup>4</sup> The new ruling class appeared to this enlightened aristocrat as a repellent mixture of languor, impotence, stagnation, and boredom.

Tocqueville was the first modern political thinker to foresee the possibility that a democratic society might well turn into a democracy without liberty, though he fully recognized the ‘providential’ character of modern democratic development. ‘Une grande révolution,’ he wrote in his famous *Democracy in America*, ‘s’opère parmi nous; tous la voient, mais tous ne la jugent point de la même manière. Les uns la considèrent comme une chose nouvelle, et, la prenant pour un accident, ils espèrent pouvoir encore l’arrêter; tandis que d’autres la jugent irrésistible, parce qu’elle leur semble le fait le plus continu, le plus permanent que l’on connaisse dans l’histoire.’<sup>5</sup> One must bear in mind that these sentences were written in 1835! After his

<sup>1</sup> Faguet, *Politiques et moralistes du dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris 1891, vol. i, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> *Souvenirs d’Alexis de Tocqueville*, publiés par le Comte de T., Paris 1893, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, Paris 1864, vol. 1, p. 2.

experiences as a member of the French Parliament and as Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Prince-President Louis Napoleon, Tocqueville was able to summarize his political theory in the preface to *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*. There he said: 'Au milieu des ténèbres de l'avenir on peut déjà découvrir trois vérités très claires. La première est que tous les hommes de nos jours sont entraînés par une force inconnue qu'on peut espérer régler et ralentir, mais non vaincre, qui tantôt les pousse doucement et tantôt les précipite vers la destruction de l'aristocratie; la seconde, que parmi toutes les sociétés du monde, celles qui auront toujours le plus de peine à échapper pendant longtemps au gouvernement absolu seront précisément ces sociétés où l'aristocratie n'est plus et ne peut plus être; la troisième enfin, que nulle part le despotisme ne doit produire des effets plus pernicious que dans ces sociétés-là; car plus qu'aucune autre sorte de gouvernement il y favorise le développement de tous les vices auxquels ces sociétés sont spécialement sujettes, et les pousse ainsi du côté même où, suivant une inclinaison naturelle, elles penchaient déjà.'<sup>1</sup> There is, according to Tocqueville, only one way of escaping from a menacing despotism: the guarantee of *freedom*. 'La Liberté seule . . . peut combattre efficacement dans ces sortes de sociétés les vices qui leurs sont naturels et les retenir sur la pente où elles glissent.'<sup>2</sup> But it was the dictatorship of Napoleon III, result of a degenerate Liberalism, which taught Tocqueville that only freedom based on authority could effect lasting democratic institutions.

Tocqueville has been largely misunderstood until recently. His contemporaries took him for a Liberal, perhaps a very refined one, though as early as in 1836 Tocqueville wrote to a friend of his: 'Je montrerai donc franchement ce goût de la liberté. . . . Mais en même temps, je professerai un si grand respect pour la justice, un sentiment si vrai de l'amour de l'ordre et des lois, un attachement si profond et si raisonné pour la morale et les croyances religieuses, que je ne puis croire qu'on n'aperçoive pas en moi un *libéral d'une espèce nouvelle*, qu'on me confonde avec

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, Paris 1877, p. x (Avant-propos).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. xii.

la plupart des démocrates de nos jours.’<sup>1</sup> This ‘new kind of Liberal’ was indeed, as Dilthey has pointed out, ‘the greatest political thinker of the west since Aristotle and Machiavelli.’ Living, as we do, in an age in which new plebiscitarian dictatorships threaten the very existence of our western civilization, we are perhaps better prepared to understand the legacy of Tocqueville’s teachings.

(b) FRENCH POLITICAL ROMANTICISM

However, the specific French contribution to European life in that age went beyond the signal services which the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 rendered to the rest of Europe; it consisted no less in the truly French idea of civilization, which was vivified and strengthened at that time. Guizot regarded France as the heart of civilization and civilization as a development of liberty, whereas Michelet, a much more ardent and original mind, saw the dawn of a social age led by his beloved France.

The special feature of French civilization is that in it intellectual achievement and politics, culture and politics, closely coincide. France has never known that immense gulf between the State and culture which is analysed in this book in the chapter on Germany. In Germany at that period the philosopher and scholar was the leading type, in England the statesman and politician, but in France the author, the *homme de lettres*. He is the true representative of civilization, and this made it easy for a French author of the nineteenth century to enter the political battlefield. Chateaubriand was Foreign Secretary under Louis XVIII, Lamennais was one of the heroes of the Revolution of 1848, and Victor Hugo, after 1830, developed into a champion of Liberalism, a courageous pioneer against the dictatorship of the third Napoleon.

The beautiful phrase, the noble gesture, have always counted more in France than elsewhere, but they never meant more than in French romanticism.

The connection between French romanticism and the society of the period has not hitherto been sufficiently explained. In

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Redier, *Comme disait M. de Tocqueville*, Paris 1925, p. 59.

contrast to the later German romanticism, French romanticism was not correlated with political reaction. Both the young Victor Hugo as well as the young Chateaubriand are romantics, and in a wide sense even an Utopian Socialist like Saint-Simon was a romanticist. The change of taste brought about by the new school was the result of a new experience. Voltaire remained a supporter of classicism, but a generation which had experienced the brutal dangerousness and uncertainty of life could have little interest in the cold architecture, the rigid rules, of the classic school. The airs of boredom and melancholy which the young Chateaubriand displayed were not only significant of the weary aristocrat, but were also the expression of a deep insight into the transitoriness of human life. The new aesthetic was an aesthetic of emotion and an aesthetic of religion. It freed Christianity from the fortress of dogmatism and reinterpreted it as a concern of the cultural *élite*. Chateaubriand and Saint-Simon both took part in this enterprise, although each in a very different way. Both were aristocrats by birth; both were *bonvivants* who assembled about them a circle of supporters and disciples; both aimed at a revival of France through the Christian spirit.

Chateaubriand was a rediscoverer of old values. He admired the classics as well as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He could appreciate Homer as well as Virgil, Dante as well as Petrarch. His chief book, *Génie du Christianisme*, describes in brilliant language and with seductive charm the beauty of Christianity. Art to him is not objective, but springs from inner experience. His originally sceptical and analytical mind had turned to Christianity under the painful experience of the tragic fate of some of his family relatives during the Revolution. To him feeling is everything, 'names are but sound and smoke.' Chateaubriand might have given this motto from *Faust* to his book. Pascal had shown that Christianity is compatible with reason. Chateaubriand now tried to prove that it could also be harmonious with aestheticism. Moreover Chateaubriand was not an apologist of Christianity but rather a guide to its riches. His *Génie du Christianisme* made Christianity again a subject for the *salon* and for literature in the eyes of educated people. The Church had experienced a period of suffering, and according to

this fervent writer she was entering on a new renaissance, strengthened by her ordeal. 'Le monde dégénéré appelle une seconde prédication de l'Évangile, *le christianisme se renouvelle*, et sort victorieux du plus terrible des assauts que l'enfer lui ait encore livrés. Qui sait si ce que nous avons pris pour la chute de l'Église n'est pas cela même qui la relève. Elle périssait dans la richesse et le repos; elle ne se souvenait plus de la croix; la croix a réparé, elle sera sauvée.'<sup>1</sup>

Saint-Simon's attitude was very different. Whereas Chateaubriand wanted to revive the old Christianity, Saint-Simon sought to create a new one. He opposed the spirit of the Enlightenment less than the spirit of the Church. His short treatise of 1825, *Nouveau Christianisme*, is a pertinent dialogue between a Conservative and a representative of progress. Saint-Simon wants his reader to distinguish between that which God Himself has said and that which the Church has said in His name. Chateaubriand connected religion with art. Saint-Simon asks for a new theology in an age which had given birth to a new physics, chemistry, and physiology. Chateaubriand points aloft to the vision of a Christian aesthetic, Saint-Simon seeks to blend Christianity and Socialism, the idea of religion, and that of equality. 'Dieu a dit: Les hommes doivent se conduire en frères à l'égard les uns des autres; ce principe sublime renferme tout ce qu'il y a de divin dans la religion chrétienne.'<sup>2</sup> But Saint-Simon draws conclusions which aim at a social reform. 'La religion doit diriger la société vers le grand but de l'amélioration la plus rapide possible du sort de la classe la plus pauvre.' While Saint-Simon repeats the sharpest accusations of the Liberals against the Pope and the Jesuits, he praises no less ardently than Chateaubriand the spirit of early Christianity: 'L'esprit du christianisme est la douceur, la bonté, la charité, et par-dessus la loyauté. Ses armes sont la persuasion et la démonstration.'<sup>3</sup>

Saint-Simon did not fail to recognize that in reality political equality mattered little, whereas economic equality mattered much. It is therefore rather unjust to label his Socialism as

<sup>1</sup> *Génie du Christianisme ou Beautés de la religion chrétienne*, original ed., iv, Paris 1802, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Saint-Simon, *Nouveau Christianisme*, Paris 1825, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

'Utopian.' No doubt the economic basis of his doctrine was weak, no doubt many of his disciples overstressed such points as the rehabilitation of the flesh and the emancipation of woman. But he demanded also the planning of society and of production. He well knew that *il faut un système pour remplacer un système*. Organization of labour, a more equal distribution of property, the abolition of inheritance of property—these were his essential demands. 'Maintenant que la dimension de notre planète est connue, il fait faire par les savants, par les artistes et les industriels un plan général de travaux à exécuter pour rendre la position territoriale de l'espèce humaine la plus productive possible et la plus agréable à habiter sous tous les rapports.'<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon believed in authority and preferred the dictatorship of the worthiest to a social revolution. As a Socialist he wanted not liberty but the authority of the trained scientist.

Whilst Chateaubriand represents the conservative and Saint-Simon the Socialist branch of French romanticism, Victor Hugo combines romanticism and Liberalism in an impressive manner. His mission as a poet made him a champion of the liberty of the individual and the pioneer of universal fraternity. The Utopian Socialism of Saint-Simon was followed by the Utopian Liberalism of Victor Hugo:

Le poète en des jours impies  
Vient préparer des jours meilleurs.  
Il est l'homme des utopies;  
Les pieds ici, les yeux ailleurs.  
C'est lui qui sur toutes les têtes,  
En tout temps, pareil aux prophètes,  
Dans sa main, où tout peut tenir,  
Doit, qu'on l'insulte ou qu'on le loue,  
Comme une torche qu'il secoue,  
Faire flamboyer l'avenir!<sup>2</sup>

Victor Hugo had begun as a follower of the Bourbons, but became after 1848 a Republican and supported in the Chamber the liberty of the press and the abolition of capital punishment. Whereas in Germany culture and the State were in sharp opposition throughout the nineteenth century, in France this was so only under the dictatorships of Napoleon I and Napoleon III.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Hugo, *Les Rayons et les Ombres*, première pièce: 'Fonction du poète,' 1840.

Napoleon I persecuted Madame de Staël, Napoleon III Victor Hugo. For nineteen years, from 1851 till after the fall of the Government in 1870, Victor Hugo lived in exile in Belgium and the Channel Isles. When later the greatest French author of his age was offered an amnesty by the officials of Napoleon, he answered proudly: 'Quand la liberté rentrera, je rentrerai.'

(c) FRANCE AND NAPOLEON III

Two decades and a lost war were necessary before the French could get rid of dictatorship. Bonaparte's *coup d'état* was based on ideologies as well as on class-consciousness. His famous name carried romance with it. From 1815 onwards poets such as Béranger had been spreading the Napoleonic legend. Amongst the peasants the superstition lingered that Napoleon was not dead but would return one day as a kind of earthly saviour to fulfil all their earthly wishes. Moreover, Napoleon III's power rested on the trinity of Church, bureaucracy, and army. It was a trick of the unimpressive but cunning nephew of the greater Napoleon to play off *bourgeoisie* and proletariat against one another, to pretend at one and the same time to guarantee civic order and to help the suffering labourers. Before his *coup d'état* of 2nd December 1851, he often consulted the Socialist Proudhon, and with the help of the *Société du Dix-Décembre*, a very militant organization of Bonapartist propaganda, appealed to the slum proletariat. The social programme of this dictator was shot with changing colours and full of contradictions. Bonaparte, as Karl Marx has truly remarked, 'would fain pose as the patriarchal benefactor of all classes. But he cannot give to one class without robbing the others.'<sup>1</sup> Actually it was a change in the attitude of the *bourgeoisie* after 1848, its fear of Socialism after the rising of the proletariat and the grim battles between workmen and soldiers in the streets of Paris, its readiness to come to terms with the Church, which facilitated Bonaparte's dictatorship.

Until 1848 the *bourgeoisie*, following the tradition of 1789, refused any concessions to the Church and to its freedom to

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, London 1926, p. 142.



teach. But now Thiers came round, and the fear of revolution brought about what the Catholic party had aimed at in vain before 1848, i.e. the solution of the educational problem in a Catholic sense. 'I have changed my mind,' the Liberal leader confessed to the Catholic group in the commission on school reform, 'not because of a revolution in my convictions, but because of a revolution in the social order.'<sup>1</sup> He appealed vigorously to religious sentiment as the only thing capable of overcoming imminent anarchy. It is by a strange paradox that Thiers thus became more popish than the Pope, for as regards the submission of elementary teachers to the Church he went further than the Catholics. In the interests of the upper classes he would have religion maintained in the lower classes.

Napoleon's dictatorship assumed the appearance of being based on a plebiscite of the masses. Every man could vote, but the dictator alone could execute the will of the people; such was the new interpretation of the idea of equality. 'The monarchy,' wrote an acute German observer in Paris in 1852, 'is dead and the republic is not alive. It is like those trees of liberty which have been planted everywhere and most of which have withered, often with faded tricolours hanging from them while the policemen patrol beneath them.'<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon III formally acknowledged the influence of the people on the Government. He was very generous with plebiscites, for the elections were to form a link between the masses and the president. The nation must vote not in order to represent itself but in order to be ruled.

This plebiscitarian dictatorship of the new Napoleon had a triple aim: prosperity for the capitalists, public works and sensations for the masses, harsh oppression and persecution for all opponents. The new would-be Caesar used the apparatus of bureaucracy no less ruthlessly than his uncle.

Even before 2nd December, the President and the Assembly worked together to destroy all democratic institutions, denouncing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Gurian, *Die politischen und sozialen Ideen des französischen Katholizismus, 1789-1914*, Munich-Gladbach 1929, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> K. Frantz, *Masse oder Volk*, ed. J. P. Mayer, *Deutsche Schriften*, Potsdam 1933, p. 37.

all propaganda for democracy as Socialism. Politically suspect teachers were dismissed and newspapers suppressed. The police and the magistrates prosecuted workers' unions, co-operative societies, masonic lodges, and benefit societies. The police watched all assemblies, and hundreds of minor officials with unacceptable views were dismissed, even to the postman and the scavenger. After the *coup d'état* a true Terror, with proscriptions and deportations, began. The orders in the circular of the Minister of the Interior to the prefects were extremely outspoken. 'Entire liberty of conscience, but a firm and persistent use of all allowable means of influence or persuasion—that is what the Government expect of you.'<sup>1</sup> According to George Sand, one half of France was busy informing against the other half. As regards the limitation of the power of Parliament, Napoleon III took a leaf from the book of Napoleon I. The Legislative was permitted only to debate, and even that only after the annual address of the President. The Legislative was not permitted to put questions to ministers and the latter were not responsible to it. Moreover, Napoleon regarded himself as an instrument of God. Providence, he thought, had specially chosen him, and to him the means he used were, however terrible and hard in themselves, justified by his high purpose.

Napoleon aimed at impressing people: although he had not the calibre of a Caesar he wanted to act like a Caesar and at the same time like an *ami du peuple*. 'My wish,' he would say, 'is to deal in the great, to strike the imagination.'

As to-day, so then, the dictators erected huge and expensive buildings as deliberate propaganda for their systems and to divert public attention from the shortcomings of their regimes. Napoleon III had his own method of planning. He commissioned a prefect to reorganize Paris architecturally. From a hygienic point of view the abolition of a chaos of little streets and narrow lanes was to be welcomed, while from a strategic point of view it also served to eliminate potential barricades. Napoleon I had been in some respects a Spartan, but Napoleon III was in many ways an Epicurean. He tried in vain to make

<sup>1</sup> E. Bourgeois, *History of Modern France, 1815-1913*, vol. i, p. 399.

up for his lack of personal magnetism by the splendour of his court.

Louis Philippe had been anxious to avoid any belligerent entanglements, but Louis Napoleon now discovered the French need for *gloire*. The Crimean War proved a success and increased the prestige of the dictatorship in a nation which was tired of the haggling of the parliamentarians. But the ruthless pressure of the regime soon estranged him from those politicians of the moderate Right who at first had welcomed the *coup d'état*. For, with the fading out of the old aristocratic *élite*, Napoleon failed to form the new social *élite* indispensable in the growing mass democracy. Montalembert and his *parti catholique* soon regretted having supported a system the dangers of which they had not recognized in time. They could not exorcise the spirits they had called up. For Napoleon was chary of allowing influence to the clergy. After 1863 an estrangement took place between the Catholics and Napoleon and the Emperor began to seek the support of the Liberals. He was willing to grant the deputies a greater share in the government. In 1860 the Constitution was modified in a democratic direction; the Government was still not responsible to Parliament, but both Chambers of Parliament might now discuss an address after the annual speech from the throne and might vote upon it. A minister now had to expound Bills to the Chambers and to defend them. Even the press was allowed a greater liberty and parliamentary proceedings were published.

This time, however, the Liberal opposition avoided the trap. It made skilful use of the concessions of Napoleon to reveal the weaknesses of his system and to undermine it step by step. For a time the formation of a third party, which included the perennial M. Thiers and the Orleanists, prevented open conflict between Government and nation.

In January 1870 a parliamentary Cabinet was actually introduced through Émile Olivier, the confidant of Napoleon, but the concession came too late. The feeble foreign policy of Napoleon played no less a part in the breakdown of his system than did his inept internal policy.

(d) FRENCH POSITIVISM

Whilst the intellectual aspect of the first third of the century was coloured by romanticism, in the second positivism became the most fruitful and influential movement in France. It combined a progressive, rational interpretation of history with an attempt to transfer the exactitude of the now prosperous natural sciences to the social and moral sciences. It did not share the rather naïve optimism of the theorists of the French Revolution, but it aimed at a new doctrine of the common good on the changed social basis of the industrial age.

Auguste Comte, the father of positivism, formed a bridge from the purely constructive thought of Saint-Simon, whose pupil he was, to the conscientious research work of Renan and Taine. Comte's work reflects *les deux France*, the Catholic and the secularized, to a degree which has perhaps so far not been fully realized. It formed an original synthesis of these two French elements—the synthesis of an intellectual aristocrat who could neither renounce his Catholic origin nor the modern trend of independent thought. Catholic in principle were his collectivism, his stress on authority, his idea of a new cult of humanity. Comte's famous law of the three phases is an endeavour to show development in history from a religious, via a metaphysical, to a scientific approach to the universe. In spite of the great influence of his scientific rationalism on Spencer, Renan, and Taine, he himself never completely cut adrift from religion or metaphysics. His cult of humanity was a substitute for religion, and although he held that any explanation of phenomena was mere metaphysics, he took his stand on a law of development which was to him identical with progress and which, as a matter of fact, was a new attempt to explain historical facts. Comte's Catholic bias is shown in his antipathy to modern anti-Catholic movements. Protestantism, the *philosophes*, the *esprit révolutionnaire* of 1789 were to him nothing but landmarks in a development towards individualism and social decay. Thus the champion of a new collectivism became one of the most outspoken critics of the ideology of 1789. The ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity were to him mere negations, although at their time necessary ones. It

is quite useless, he assures us, to give them positive names. Liberty was but a provisional expedient, equality excellent only as a means of destroying a bad hierarchy but as a positive principle meaningless. For Comte's system denies the possibilities of equality as such, as much as does the racial ideology later formulated by Count Gobineau. According to Comte equality may exist among animals but it has never existed among human beings, who differ from one another over a gamut ranging from the genius to the idiot. The continual progress of civilization tends to develop to extremes the intellectual differences between men. This intellectual aristocrat therefore denounces universal suffrage as a symptom of a disorganized society. Modern democracy is to him simply an indolent anarchy from which only a reorganization of the spiritual powers can save mankind. The place once held by the religious papacy is now to be occupied by a scientific papacy. The individual acquires worth through absorption in collective bodies such as the family, the fatherland, and, finally, in the *grand être*, i.e. mankind. Thus Comte created a pseudo-Catholic religion of intellect, in which 'love is the principle, order the basis, and progress the end' (Faguet). His cult provided for priests and rites of mankind, and correspondingly his followers regarded him almost as a saint. His somewhat exclusive doctrine gathered about the master a circle of highbrow devotees, one might almost say worshippers.

Whereas Comte was constructive and sometimes intricate, Renan was lucid, sensitive, and almost feminine. The young Renan was deeply convinced of the privilege of religion, of the chosen character of the clergy. Later their place was taken for him by the dignity of the intellectual *élite*. Something of the monk, something of the member of a refined religious sect, remained in him throughout his life. God appeared to him finally merely as an infinite process of growth or as an abstract law. In his *Avenir de la science*, written in 1848 but not published till 1881, this belief in development found striking expression: as in the systems of Saint-Simon and Comte, science for him has the additional function of organizing mankind: 'La religion a fini son œuvre; c'est à la raison de faire la même autrement; il

faut l'investir de la même autorité que la religion posséda naguère.'<sup>1</sup>

Like Comte, Saint-Simon, and Proudhon, he devoutly believes in the new church of science and art. 'Les prêtres, ce sont les philosophes, les savants, les artistes, les poètes, c'est-à-dire les hommes, qui ont pris l'idéal pour la part de leur héritage et ont renoncé à la portion terrestre.'<sup>2</sup>

Ethics and intellectualism are still interconnected and the later warning of Sorel is already anticipated by Renan. 'Science sans conscience est ruine de l'âme'—science without ethical aims is a crime.

German idealism influenced Renan the thinker, and Renan the politician deals again and again with the relations between Germany and France. Renan was an enlightened Liberal, to whom all national hatreds were impossible; his famous lecture *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* allows neither language nor race as the criterion of a nation: 'Une grande aggrégation d'hommes, saine d'esprit et chaude de cœur, crée une conscience morale qui s'appelle une nation.'<sup>3</sup>

In one of his famous open letters to David Strauss written during the war of 1870-1 and shortly after it, he complains: 'Le grand malheur du monde est que la France ne comprend pas l'Allemagne et que l'Allemagne ne comprend pas la France.'<sup>4</sup> His criticism of Germany is outspoken without ever becoming virulent.

'Votre race germanique a toujours l'air de croire à la Walhalla, mais la Walhalla ne serait jamais le royaume de Dieu.' Eighteen years later, after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, he criticized the German lack of oratory, but still more their lack of chivalry towards the weak, and he did so not as a nationalist but as a cultured man of letters. The powerful rhetoric of a Lacordaire and a Montalembert, he complained, was strange to the Germans: 'Chez nous, toute l'opinion libérale sans distinction de doctrine est avec celui qui résiste. En Allemagne, l'opposition, la résistance

<sup>1</sup> Cf. É. Faguet, *Politiques et moralistes du dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris 1900, vol. iii, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> E. Renan, *L'Avenir de la science. Pensées de 1848*, 5th ed., Paris 1890, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> E. Renan, *Pages françaises*, 7th ed., Paris 1926, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

à la loi, sont une cause de défaveur. La persécution ne donne pas grand prestige, car l'Allemand est pour ce qui est fort: il n'a pas cette générosité, souvent superficielle, il faut le dire, qui nous porte à croire que le faible a toujours raison.'<sup>1</sup>

In a fine speech on the beauty of the French language Renan once claimed that fanaticism in France would be an impossibility and expressed his pride in the unity of culture and society, in the heritage of 1789 in the *civilisation française*:

'L'abolition du servage, les droits de l'homme, l'égalité, la liberté ont été pour la première fois proclamés en français.'<sup>2</sup>

In spite of differences between them, Saint-Simon, Comte, and Renan are landmarks on the common road of the idea of progress, of belief if not in human nature then at least in science. They all shared a conviction that man is a rational being and that society might be governed by the law of reason. Hippolyte Taine was no less indefatigable than Renan in the analysis of history. This true positivist collected thousands and thousands of *petits faits significatifs*. But he starts from different premisses. He is not like his predecessors a Liberal, but a Conservative reconstructing history on a pessimistic basis. Taine's psychology is independent and original. With Comte he endeavours to apply the methods of the physical sciences to moral science. He desires an anatomy of human history analogous to that of natural history. To him 'vice and virtue are products, like vitriol and sugar.' But in opposition to Comte as well as to Marx he seeks not to alter but only to interpret the world. He examines the fundamental factors of the historical process but he does not try to direct its trend to any ultimate ends. Like Comte and Renan he rejected religion, but, unlike them, while he made admirable efforts to promote science he had no ultimate expectations from it.

The son of a respected provincial *bourgeois* family in the Ardennes, Taine was reserved and timid. He seemed to fear that human nature into which he had such deep insight. But his avoidance of any prophetic gesture, his tendency to look back instead of forward, was not merely the result of the morbid scientific aestheticism of a sensitive individual. It was to a certain degree the expression of French *bourgeois* liberalism which,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 206.

as we have seen, changed after 1848 from the Left to the Right, and became staunchly conservative, defending liberty and property against 'the red menace.'

Taine's political position, which he once called a 'position moyenne libérale et conservatrice,' is characterized by emphasis on the central function of property, and by the somewhat authoritarian character accorded to the State. According to Taine, it is not society which creates property, but property which creates society. For the protection of property the State is established on an authoritarian basis; the family and the State, as his theory of 1864 explains, are both founded on the principle of obedience—the one on the authority of the husband and father, the other on the authority of the leader.<sup>1</sup> Taine stands for the stability and security of an authoritatively ordered nation of *rentiers*. 'I should prefer,' he said once, 'to be a *petit bourgeois* in a society of *petits bourgeois* than a *seigneur* in a society of *seigneurs*.' But on the whole Taine's determinism and pessimism with its denial of philosophic liberty or of the natural rights of man was by no means contradictory to an authoritative system such as that of Napoleon III.

Taine himself was influenced by the most divergent trends of thought—by Hegelianism and modern science, by Spinozism and the romantic idea of a national soul, and last but not least by the unacademic psychology of great contemporary artists such as Balzac, Stendhal, and Sainte-Beuve. Here is not the place to deal with his well-known three categories, of race, *milieu*, and epoch, which are sketched rather than precisely worked out in his famous *History of English Literature*. The specialist to-day will certainly criticize many points in this historical presentation, but he would find it difficult to deny that Taine possessed a deep insight into the English character and social background, perhaps sometimes even a deeper one than that into the French nation expressed in his *Origines de la France contemporaine* (1876-94).

This work was written after the war of 1871, which completely shocked Taine's instinct for stability and security, more especially through his personal experiences in the events of the Paris Commune. Taine showed outspoken antipathy to the fanatical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Introduction to the *History of English Literature*.



mob of Jacobins, and to such great leaders as Bonaparte, motivated by great vices. He analysed *l'esprit classique* of enlightened philosophy which, born in antiquity and revived in humanism, celebrated its greatest triumphs in Voltaire and Rousseau. Taine took this *esprit classique* mercilessly to task, making it responsible both for the Revolution and the Paris Commune. *L'esprit classique* was to him the father of *l'esprit révolutionnaire*. The revolutionists, according to him, ought to have brought about organic reform after the English model instead of radical change based on radical principles. But Taine was no political thinker and did not recognize the connection between internal policy and foreign policy. He excelled rather in analysing political theories as such, than in estimating the political situations from which they arose.

#### (e) THE DREYFUS AFFAIR

Taine's antipathy to the *esprit révolutionnaire* was shared by the French *bourgeoisie*. Fear of the armed workers<sup>1</sup> had caused the drift of the *bourgeoisie* to the Right in 1848, and the experience of the Paris Commune in 1871 had increased their conservative attitude. No one mourned the fall of Napoleon III, but the parliamentary majority was ready to accept the restoration of a moderate monarchy in the person of an Orléans or a Bourbon. This plan was frustrated through the obstinacy of the candidates. When in 1875 the Comte de Chambord was asked to accept the crown he declined on a condition which had a symbolic rather than a real significance: the comte refused to accept the tricolour as the royal flag in place of the Bourbon fleur-de-lis. The tricolour, of course, stood for the legacy of the French Revolution which the conservative *bourgeoisie* might belittle but which they could not now repudiate. The cleavage which characterized the French Republic after 1870 appeared not merely in the dualism of *ancien régime* and revolutionary principle, but also in an opposition of social strata: the army, the landowners, the great industrialists and the Church were ranged against the *petit bourgeois*, the peasants, and the intellectuals. It was the Dreyfus affair which, like a flash of lightning, suddenly illuminated the

bitterness and depth of this antagonism. The dispute as to the guilt or innocence of a Jewish captain on the General Staff was in itself of minor importance. But it became a battle for power and rights between two *élites*. It was a struggle between two morales which deeply stirred the passions of the Frenchman. It was decisive for the political future of the country that the Right lost, that the clergy were defeated, and that the State with its *idée laïque* won the day. There is a logical trend from 1898, when Dreyfus was acquitted, to 1905, when Cambon carried through the separation of Church and State.

The Dreyfus conflict has, however, yet another aspect, for in it more than in any other event in the nineteenth century the close connection between literature and public life can be traced. It roused Zola from the inertia caused by his fame to write his biting open letter to the President, *J'Accuse*. Clemenceau exhibited his power of advocacy in his essays for the paper *L'Aurore*, Anatole France wrote his shrewd stories of contemporary life, Maurice Barrès drew from it the elegant formulation of his nationalism, and Sorel from being a supporter of the Dreyfusards became their pronounced opponent and critic. The Dreyfus affair represented a watershed from which the streams of French political and intellectual life poured down in opposite directions. It was but a step, though a long one, from Taine to Maurice Barrès—the step from thinker to political propagandist, from scholar to *bel esprit*, from conscientious investigator of truth to sometimes unscrupulous publicist. Taine had sceptically contrasted 1789's Reason with 1880's Science. He had loved learning and had lived for it but he had never believed in it. Barrès went further. He attempted to dethrone Science, to dismiss Reason. With him began *that self-hatred of the intelligentsia* which soon spread like an epidemic and which has found its counterpart in modern Fascism. That self-hatred was nowhere more paradoxical than in France, for in no other country had the intelligentsia played such a great political role. Possibly for that very reason a reaction occurred which questioned and belittled the value and function of the intellectuals. French *esprit* had always enjoyed brilliant epigrams, but it was undoubtedly something new for Barrès and Sorel to use their best phrases to

demonstrate the impotence or positive harmfulness of intellect and the intellectuals. French nationalism opposed the *logicien de l'absolu* and defended the *sens du relatif*. Intelligence, it was argued, was only a minor and superficial attribute of the human being: 'Intellectuel: individu qui se persuade que la société doit se fonder sur la logique: et qui méconnaît qu'elle repose en fait sur des nécessités antérieures et peut-être étrangères à la raison individuelle.'<sup>1</sup> The *sens relatif* had led the young Barrès to a kind of aesthetic nihilism, it made the older Barrès the father of nationalism. The disciple of Taine was a strict determinist: 'Nationalisme c'est l'acceptation d'un déterminisme. Il n'y a pas de liberté de pensée.' The individual to him is merely a by-product *d'une chose immortelle*, yet even this relativist regards the *nation* as absolute. 'Le nationalisme ne doit pas être simplement une expression politique: c'est une discipline, une méthode réfléchie pour nous attacher à tout ce qu'il y a de véritablement éternel et qui doit se développer d'une façon continue dans notre pays.'<sup>2</sup> The aesthete Barrès invented the famous formula *La terre et les morts*. He preached worship of the graves. It is true to say that in his political philosophy Chateaubriand's romanticism is combined with Taine's traditionalism: 'Une nation, c'est la possession en commun d'un antique cimetière et la volonté de continuer à faire valoir cet héritage indivis.'<sup>3</sup>

Barrès was influential, for he was a man of letters and at the same time a man of action. From 1889 till 1893 he adhered, as a deputy, to the Boulanger group. Through General Boulanger, champion of *revanche* and anti-parliamentarian, he expected a renaissance of the French nation. Although Boulanger soon disappointed him a plebiscitarian Caesarism remained his ideal. Barrès has illustrated his national ideology in a trilogy of novels significantly called *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (1898-1903). The first, *Les Déracinés*, is perhaps the best document of his attitude. He adopts an artistic device of Zola's in this *roman expérimentale*. Seven young men from Lorraine leave their province and go to Paris under the influence of a republican schoolmaster, charming but irresponsible, who, instead of a natural

<sup>1</sup> M. Barrès, *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, Paris 1902, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 107.

love of the fatherland and of the national soil, had taught them the moral philosophy of Kant and the outlook of the freethinker. We are shown the vicissitudes of all seven amidst the temptations and political maelstrom of the capital. Most of them become *déracinés*, uprooted intellectuals, and sink into the 'proletariat of the bachelors.' Seduced by a flamboyant intellectualism, they never learned to cope with everyday life. When finally these seven men from the country are lost to Holy France the rationalistic system of State education is pronounced guilty of their loss, assisted by the destructive influences of foreigners, nationalized Frenchmen, and Jewish bankers of German origin. French nationalism poured scorn and denunciation on all 'intruders,' meaning thereby Protestants and Jews. According to this hot-blooded ideology Zola, for instance, was no Frenchman, as he was supposedly of Venetian origin. He and other 'uprooted' spokesmen of the Dreyfusards were described with bitter satire in *Leurs Figures* and contrasted with army officers, who are all made to appear charming, heroic, and ideal French personalities.

Barrès's ideas have been adopted by the *Action française* group. Charles Maurras looked on Barrès as the leading exponent of nationalist doctrines, and developed his theories further in the daily political struggle. His *nationalisme intégrale* aimed at co-operation between Catholics and atheistic traditionalists for a French renaissance. In and about the year 1900 Maurras's group was supported by no less than twenty-seven out of the forty members of the *Académie française*. Barrès tried, at least in his earlier works, to understand the German character, but Maurras regarded all non-French nations more or less as barbarians. Between Taine and Nietzsche there had been a bond of mutual admiration, but to Maurras Nietzsche was no more than the son of a Protestant barbarian. He charged Germany with every 'evil' that existed in France at that time—secularized education, Protestantism, Kantianism, Marxism—to him all were products imported from Germany. Germany and Protestantism, Jewry and internationalism were identified by him in a way which grotesquely contradicted the facts. Undoubtedly the separation of Church and State increased the contrast between Catholicism and secularism, between French nationalism and un-French

cosmopolitanism. To this nationalist attitude everything French was classic and everything foreign was barbarous. 'Il fallait,' Léon Daudet wrote thirteen years after the World War, 'une morale à l'enseignement laïque, une morale qui fût à l'opposé de la morale catholique, et permît de brimer celle-ci, en obscurcissant, avec nos organes classiques, l'histoire de France . . . Le fondement de la morale laïque chez nous, dans l'enseignement primaire, comme dans l'enseignement supérieure, simultanément contaminés par le canal commun de la politique, c'est le criticisme allemand représenté par ces trois noms: Kant, Georges Hamann, juif de la Hanse, et Martin Luther.'<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately M. Daudet is completely wrong in his virulent generalizations, for Hamann was not a Jew, nor could his anti-rational emotionalism possibly form a link between 'le mauvais moine de la Wartburg et le philosophe de Königsberg.'

(f) FROM PROUDHON TO LÉON BLUM

A far more original thinker than Maurras and Daudet was Georges Sorel (1847-1922). As with Comte, we find in him elements from both camps in France—from the national Conservative as well as from the anti-clerical and Socialist. The saying of Goethe, 'He is no artificially constructed book but a human being with all his contradictions,' could scarcely better be applied than to him. For Sorel was always concerned with genuine problems, even though he changed so often, and became successively, or sometimes at the same time, Socialist and Puritan, champion of revolution and upholder of tradition, defender of the proletariat and panegyrist of the industrialists, friend of the trade unions and opponent of the masses. Although in old age Sorel was full of admiration for Lenin, Lenin did not reciprocate. The man, who shortly before his death acclaimed Russia as the Promised Land, early recognized the importance of Mussolini and has, moreover, considerably influenced the Fascist ideology. Sorel, who was an engineer for many years, was subject to various influences. Again and again he discussed Karl Marx's doctrines. In 1906 the anti-rationalistic theories of Bergson

<sup>1</sup> *Les Humanités et la culture*, Paris 1931, p. 92.

fascinated him. Vico's theory of the cycle in history was also for some time attractive to him; but the greatest influence of all came from Proudhon. One may perhaps regard the trend from Proudhon to Sorel as that of *unofficial* Socialism in France. For not Proudhon but Marx was accepted as official dogma by the congresses of French Socialists in 1867 and 1868.

Similarly the literary struggle of Sorel, the struggle of anarchic Syndicalism against the official Socialism of Jaurès, remained merely an episode. In this unofficial Socialism Conservative tendencies are closely linked with those of revolutionary France. It was not Proudhon's denunciation of private property, his famous sentence, 'La propriété, c'est le vol,' which Sorel shared with his predecessor. He accepted, however, three other important points in his philosophy, namely, his morality, his praise of force, his estimation of work. In the many volumes of *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église* (1858) Proudhon fights for morality in the modern world with passion and even with violence. The age of feudalism and of ecclesiastical rule was to him a period of exploitation, whereas the age of the French Revolution, recently begun, will, he assures us, be an era of justice and of constructive work. 'L'autorité et la charité ont fait leurs temps. A leur place nous voulons la justice.' Hitherto labour had been a sign of inferiority, for only the socially weak had had to work, but in the new society based on equality of labour everybody must work, for, to Proudhon, 'l'homme moral est le travailleur.' Proudhon displayed a solemn enthusiasm for work only comparable with that of his patriotic contemporary Carlyle. 'Le travail est la mission de l'esprit. Travailler, c'est dépenser sa vie, c'est se dévouer.'<sup>1</sup> To Proudhon the modern factory worker, like the modern peasant, was a kind of Marathon runner ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of his work. For this son of a peasant put peasants and labourers on the same level and stressed, as later did Sorel, the virtues of the warrior no less than those of the worker. *La Guerre et la paix*, published in exile in Brussels (1852), is an apotheosis of that right of might, which before him Machiavelli and after him Fascism have worshipped. 'Salut à la guerre,' he cries, for war 'est un fait divin,

<sup>1</sup> Proudhon, *Contradictions économiques*, ed. Guillaumin, vol. ii, p. 465.

elle est le signe de la grandeur de l'homme.'<sup>1</sup> The ideas of sovereignty, of authority, of government, of class, of constitution, of justice and equality, have all been a result of war. Moreover, war is the origin of all aesthetic abilities and the cause of the moral qualities. This Socialist goes so far as to quote approvingly the sentence of the counter-revolutionary de Maistre: 'La guerre est divine en elle-même: parce qu'elle est une loi du monde.'<sup>2</sup> To him war is 'la manifestation la plus splendide et en même temps la plus horrible de notre espèce.' Only with an effort can Proudhon finally see his way to making any distinction between the good war of theory and the evil war of modern practice.

Sorel shares many of these views, but the situations in which the two Socialist moralists found themselves varied considerably. Proudhon was writing under the influence of the 1848 and the Caesarism of Napoleon III, whereas Sorel argued his original and contradictory theses under stress of the Dreyfus affair which finally brought the Radicals to power and founded a 'republic of professors' (Thibaudet). He had to reckon much more seriously with the trade unions and with the official Socialist party which Jaurès represented with the full weight of his rhetorical power and parliamentary skill. Therefore he was fighting against official Socialism no less than against the intellectualism of the professors and *littérati*. Proudhon in his time had fought against the spirit of the *urbs venalis*, and Sorel now directed his attacks against the decadent tendencies of a self-complacent age. It is not possible here to analyse the successive phases of Sorel's development. As a champion of Syndicalism he upheld in his treatise *L'Avenir des syndicats* the moral gospel of work, the values of severity and discipline. He points out the new task of the organized proletariat. Like the young Catholic Church which formed a bulwark against the decadence of late antiquity, like the French revolutionary armies who were to him an antidote to the decadent idealism of the Enlightenment, the modern proletariat was to prove a refuge against moral decay,

<sup>1</sup> Proudhon, *La Guerre et la paix*, Œuvres complètes, nouv. éd., Paris 1927, pp. 29-32, and Introduction by H. Moynet, p. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

*une puissante discipline morale.* Sorel's intentions have never perhaps been better expressed than in his words to Croce, to whom he wrote that he wanted 'to moralize Socialism a little.' He accepted Marxian doctrine only so far as the determination of the economic and the juridic spheres by the social process were concerned, and he sought to keep his moralism definitely beyond those spheres.

To Marx Socialism was a matter of class struggle, to Sorel it was one of education. What was to Marx a sociological law was to Sorel a question of the conscience. Consequently the end of *bourgeois* society meant to him not an actual but a moral catastrophe, i.e. the breakdown of *bourgeois* ideals in the souls of the proletarians. 'Le socialisme est une vertu qui naît.' The class struggle and the general strike are to him myths and have as such not only a symbolic but also a practical meaning. Socialism is not to make the proletariat happier but more noble. For more important than wages is the glory of work. Work ennobles both the labourer and the *entrepreneur*. Thus Sorel was no believer in the forthcoming end of capitalism. He regarded industrial capitalism in particular as a moral force, and did not, like so many of his Fascist disciples, despise even commercial capitalism. The workman as well as the *entrepreneur* is to Sorel a producer whose work is creative. Sorel upholds a sharp distinction between producer and consumer similar to that between violence and force, between myth and Utopia. He detests consumers, force, Utopia, and he praises producers, violence, myth. Whilst force only aims at material gain, violence has a symbolic meaning: 'La force a pour objet d'imposer l'organisation d'un certain ordre social dans lequel une minorité gouverne, tandis que la violence tend à la destruction de cet ordre.'<sup>1</sup> It represents a heroic and active attitude, and is not identical with despotism and dictatorship, which are children of Utopian thought, but embodies the struggle between equal opponents. Violence is a myth, and the greatest display of this myth in France so far had been the French Revolution. For myths 'express the more vigorous tendencies of a nation or of a class which come to the fore in all circumstances of life with the

<sup>1</sup> *Réflexions sur la violence*, 5th ed., Paris 1921, p. 257.



constancy of instincts.<sup>1</sup> The nation and the class struggle are not mutually exclusive in Sorel's doctrine; there are as many types of Socialism as there are nations. Only life in social units such as the family, the community, the trade union, can give sense and direction to the individual.

The champion of the general strike was at the same time a defender of the historic traditions of western civilization. He hated the reasonings of an uprooted intellectual class, but like Taine he did not deny that reason which is in tradition. In his early and interesting treatise, *Le Procès de Socrate* (1889), he blames Socrates on the grounds that his doctrine had estranged young people from their families, and that his apotheosis of love between men led to homosexuality. Moreover, he criticizes the whole political system of Pericles, who through his patronage eliminated the old order of family, property, and inheritance, and replaced it by a rationalism which made the State subject to reason. In this case, as later with the Jacobins, moral decay went hand in hand with the predominance of Utopian ideas. In the French Republic the 'secularists' optimistic belief in reason was no less repellent to him than the intellectuals' manoeuvres for power. He did not like the Church, but he definitely disliked the counter-church of the freethinker. His hatred of Jaurès was a hatred of the emptiness and shallowness of parliamentary routine. To him the coming revolution which is to result from a general strike of the proletariat, is to be one not with the intellectuals but without them. 'Nos Intellectuels, qui espèrent obtenir de la démocratie les premières places, seraient renvoyés à leur littérature; les socialistes parlementaires, qui trouvent dans l'organisation créée par la bourgeoisie les moyens d'exercer une certaine part de pouvoir, deviendraient inutiles.'<sup>2</sup>

In spite of his frequent change of views Sorel was constant throughout his life in hating *bourgeois* democracy, and an appendix to the 1919 edition of *Réflexions*, called 'Pour Lénin,' is a vigorous outburst against the democratic plutocracies of the west as the enemies of Russia. Undoubtedly Sorel did much to pave the way for Fascism by the effect of his anti-pacifistic doctrines. He

<sup>1</sup> M. Freund, *Georges Sorel*, Frankfurt-am-Main 1932, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> G. Sorel, *ibid.* p. 434.

was in opposition to the French tradition of *raison*, but he was in harmony with that of *gloire*. In his praise of glory as in his contempt for *idéologues* he had much in common with Napoleon I. Nothing reveals this better than the end of the *Réflexions*. What is permanent in history? asks Sorel, and he gives the answer: Nothing but myth, heroism, devotion to the community. 'Le syndicalisme révolutionnaire correspondrait assez bien aux armées napoléoniennes dont les soldats accomplirent tant de prouesses, tout en sachant qu'ils demeureraient pauvres. Qu'est-ce qu'il est demeuré de l'Empire? Rien que l'épopée de la Grande Armée; ce qui demeurera du mouvement socialiste actuel, ce sera l'épopée des grèves.'<sup>1</sup>

The self-hatred of the intelligentsia, its use of reason merely as an instrument, as a political tool, does not, however, represent the last word of French culture to-day. The belief in reason is too deeply rooted in the French character. Whereas in other European countries the wave of anti-intellectualism reached its pitch in the post-War period, in France a new defender of reason and of the true value of the intellect came to the fore. As a courageous successor of Pascal and Voltaire, Jules Benda challenged the various upholders of pragmatism and determinism, the advocates of class and race, the enemies of reason. In his representative book, *La Trahison des clercs* (Paris 1927), this brilliant writer scourges the intellectuals who prostitute reason as a political weapon and puts forward an intensive plea for the spiritual values, for a philosophical religion like that of Socrates, the Stoics, and Spinoza. Benda approves the cultured patriotism of Fénelon and Renan, but he rejects the hypocritical worship of power by such men as Nietzsche, Sorel, and Barrès. A truly moral attitude is to him that of Renan, in his faith that man is a free being, an immoral attitude that of Barrès with his poisonous worship of nation and race. Sorel had poured biting ridicule on the professors who lecture on and discuss abstract *justice*; such an abstraction had to him no importance whatever as one can only examine the concrete justice existing in a relation between two given factors in a given time under specified circumstances. Benda admits that it is to-day much more difficult than formerly

<sup>1</sup> G. Sorel, *ibid.* p. 436.

for the intellectual to remain pure and to keep aloof from the rough and tumble of politics. But a century and a half after Voltaire he continues the struggle against the claims of custom, history, and tradition with a like passion if not with a like wit. Benda, like Renan, might be taken for the abbot of a secular order of monks. Perhaps his negative statements are more convincing than his positive ones. In any case he finds excellent things to say against post-War political vices, against the romanticism of brutality and contempt, against the national cult of cruelty, against the irrational combination of sadism and pessimism. Benda is hostile to any participation by the intellectuals in class struggles or in clashes between nations. He desires to see the cult of power replaced by Spinoza's spiritual love of God, by his *amor Dei intellectualis*.

But this flight from politics is for the intellectual no less dangerous than his corruption by it. In any case the relationship between the intellectual life and politics, between *homme de lettres* and politician, must remain in the future as in the past a great and typically French problem. The fact that a fruitful union of these two divergent factors is possible without giving way to either extreme—a purely ascetic intellectualism or a treacherous surrender of the mind to blind social forces—is best proved to-day by the example of Léon Blum.

This leading French statesman is at once a humanist and a politician. He is a great writer and a lover of books and yet a fascinating political speaker; he has convictions and yet he is no doctrinaire; he possesses elegance of phrase and yet he never loses sight of the political exigencies of the day. Under him French Socialism left the Opposition benches and has now become fit for government. On an alliance between Radicals and Socialists, between the rank and file of the *petite bourgeoisie* and of the proletariat, the future, and, one might almost say, the sanity, of France chiefly depend. Léon Blum has often energetically resisted the appeal to the beast in man, which plays so large a role in to-day's political ideologies. His efforts are as much in harmony with the great French tradition as they are an expression of the needs of to-day. 'Mais il n'est pas vrai,' he cries to the young generation, 'que nous nous adressions à l'animal

humain, à la bête humaine. Nous nous adressons, vous l'avez vu, à ce qu'il y a de plus pur, de plus élevé dans l'homme; l'esprit de justice, d'égalité, de fraternité.'<sup>1</sup> The classic heritage of French political philosophy has found in him a new and significant embodiment, and has thereby proved its vitality for the future of France.

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<sup>1</sup> L. Blum, *Pour être socialiste*, 8th ed., Paris 1933, p. 28.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### POLITICAL THOUGHT IN GERMANY

THE attempt to define Germany's contribution to and place in the social-historical structure of Europe is fraught with great difficulties. Is it possible to form a conception of the German sufficiently dynamic to embrace both the Germani of whom we learn in the *Germania* of Tacitus and the Germany of to-day, whose character fills every impartial observer of the present European situation with doubts and misgivings? Is there such a thing as a German character persisting in history?—a question which may be asked not only of the German people (although it is especially urgent here) but also of all the nations and peoples who have shaped and determined the idea and the actuality of Europe. The German himself has again and again tried to estimate his own character—we may instance Goethe, Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Hölderlin, Fichte, Ranke, Nietzsche, and, more recently, the aged Berlin historian Kurt Breysig. The best and greatest of the Germans have repeatedly asked themselves this question, and however inconclusive their judgments may appear before the forum of present-day sociological inquiry, the right to such an inquiry cannot be denied, even though it must be assumed from the start that it will be able to offer no conclusive answer.

We can only offer a small contribution to some future comprehensive exposition of the structure of the German character—an exposition which we regard as a desideratum of historical and sociological research. Why and how great Germans have sought for the essential features of the German in the historical situations of their time it will be the task of the following pages to describe, because this continual inquiry of the German into his own historical character and his position in western culture is an essential factor for determining that character. Let us here quote a few sentences of Ranke: 'There will always be, permeating the histor<sup>ie</sup>

of every people, something which is eternal and primordial, something which you cannot explain and whose causes you cannot trace, something which you can only recognize. Thus, while events and periods in the history of the German people follow one another and change, yet wherever the spirit emerges in action it does so in a way that is special to it and always the same. The colours change, the light they refract is the same.' Although these sentences of Ranke, who gave a more comprehensive account of German, English, and French history from a general European viewpoint than perhaps any subsequent historian, spring from the romantic *Volksgeist* theory peculiar to him, they should yet be borne in mind in any attempt to understand the character of the German, for they indicate quite clearly the necessary limitations to which any inquiry of this kind is subject: we may perhaps be able to *recognize* the essential characteristics of a nation, but not to *explain* them.

A studied comparison of the history of Germany with that of England or France will reveal that the two latter nations have been, from the beginning of the modern period, self-contained nation-states, whereas Germany only achieved unity as a nation-state since the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. This circumstance constitutes a fundamental problem of German history and plays its part also, as we shall see, in a peculiarity of the German character which we shall seek to elucidate.

Very early German tribal history, which has been intensively investigated of late (for reasons which will be given later), lies outside the scope of this inquiry. We do not venture to plumb the depths of racial and unconscious relationships. We deal with historical relationships from the time when history begins to be recorded.

## I. FROM CHARLES THE GREAT TO THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

The Frankish Empire of Charlemagne, whom both French and German historians try to claim as a national hero, contained both Gallo-Frank and German tribes which were still united. Independent State development began with the partition treaty of A. 843: it was then that the West Frank and East Frank

kingdoms began to go their own ways. Before, however, we follow this path of development, we must realize that the historical foundations of the western kingdom were significantly different from those of the eastern kingdom. Before the Franks conquered Gaul under Clovis, it had been subdued by Caesar. The Gallo-Romans, as Bainville has wisely pointed out, shared five hundred years of their history with Rome. This meant that Roman tradition shaped the western kingdom, for even after the Frankish conquest the Gallo-Roman culture prevailed, and when, finally, Clovis was converted to the Roman Church, the bond with Rome was still further strengthened. The German tribes of the eastern kingdom, on the other hand, experienced the influence of Roman culture only at its furthestmost frontiers.

At the beginning of German history stands the figure of the Cheruscan leader Arminius, called by German historians Hermann the Liberator—the liberator of Germany from the menacing yoke of Rome. The Romans were unable to reduce the Germans amidst their forests. Let us glance at this early German world as it has been impressively described by Wilhelm Dilthey in his posthumous work *Von Deutscher Dichtung und Musik*: ‘A thousand years of living in the forest and on the plain had sharpened the eye of the city-less German to those changes around him which the passage of the year brings with it; his soul accompanied with profound participation the awakening of spring and the incursion of winter.’ It is probably even so that the German’s deep spontaneous feeling for nature, as expressed in poetry and music, finds its origin. Let us follow Dilthey a little further in his characterization of the structure of early German life: ‘A peculiar trait impels the German people to act in the completeness of their being and restlessly to risk their lives. Their conduct is not determined and limited by the setting up of rational objectives; they have a superabundance of energy which goes beyond their objective; there is something irrational in their actions, the foolishness of unbridled passion. When they play dice, they will stake their persons and their freedom on a last throw. In battle they take pleasure in danger. After battle they relapse into a sluggish inertia. Their myths, their heroic sagas, are completely permeated by this naïve, unconscious characteristic; they express not a cheerful view of the



world like the Greeks, nor a consciously defined purposiveness like the Romans, but strength as such without limitation. . . . 'The life of the individual is lived in the tribal community, whose customs, usages, and ideals determine the outlook of each member. 'Thus the tribal communities are moved by a collective will, discovered and realized in the meetings of fellow-members according to a simple constitutional procedure determined by customary law; one might compare them to powerful organisms which act in obedience to an obscure, yet single will.' <sup>1</sup> The kingdom of the West Franks had already been fertilized by Roman civilization, but the East Franks were brought into contact with Catholic Christian influence only under Charlemagne and then, because of the Saxon wars, very gradually and after severe conflicts. If the Frenchman is, even to-day, more defined, more shaped, and 'more civilized' than the German, it may undoubtedly be traced back to the fact of his having been subject to a more prolonged shaping by a superior culture such as was the Roman civilization. On the other hand attempts have also been made to explain the greater youthfulness of the German type by this same circumstance. The centralizing spirit of the Roman State was certainly a decisive influence in the early development of France into a nation-state.

At first, indeed, it seemed that precisely the opposite development was occurring. Neither the Merovingian nor the Carolingian monarchs succeeded in securing political unity. But when, on the death of the last Caroling, Louis V, Hugh Capet was elected king (987), a royal family came into power which was to bear the crown of France for eight hundred years. Hugh Capet was the first French king who did not understand Frankish, and France had finally separated itself from Germany. The Capetians were primarily Dukes of the Île de France; their territory embraced about four *départements* of present-day France. But they managed to break the power of the great feudal magnates, such as the Dukes of Burgundy, Flanders, and Normandy, and to lead France towards permanent political unity. Not that the great vassals of France were the only obstacles to this unity. A century of continuous war with England, where the Norman dynasty of William I had entrenched itself since 1066, threatened the

<sup>1</sup> Dilthey, *ibid.*

disruption of France. But the French defeated the English at Bouvines in 1214, Philip le Bel reduced the papacy to dependence; and under Richelieu and Louis XIV, after surmounting the Wars of Religion, France attained the peak of its political power in Europe. At that time Bossuet could truly express the feeling of his contemporaries in the words: 'Under Louis XIV France learned to know herself.' Ernst Robert Curtius comments on this sentence as follows: 'It was not merely that the succeeding age declared that epoch to be classical; it had felt, known, and willed itself to be so. . . . All the creations of this classical spirit . . . reveal the same law of style: perfect and harmonious moderation; the victory of proportion over imagination; the submission of the individual to an ideal norm. And it was these very qualities that enabled French classicism to become simultaneously a national style and a world style. Thus is once again made manifest the particular character of French culture—it succeeds in creating something universal in and through the national.' The Roman sense of universality had been fashioned into unity at a new stage of western history.

The development of Germany took a very different course. The East Frankish Carolingians were replaced by a line of Saxon emperors who were elected by the Franconians and Saxons and acknowledged by Bavaria and Swabia. Otto I, founder of the Ottonian administrative system, was much superior in power and importance to the West Frank monarchy. This superiority of the German kings was evidenced not only by their intervention in the internal troubles of the West Franks, but more especially by the revival of the empire in 962. Otto had already conquered the kingdom of Italy in his first Italian expedition of 951, claiming it as heir of the Carolingians. One of the foremost scholars of medieval German history sums up the Ottonian policy in Italy thus: 'The similarities between the situations of 800 and 962 are striking. Though the papacy had sunk lower in its representatives in the later than in the earlier period, on both occasions the Popes summoned the king to Rome. . . . Charles had overthrown the heathen Saxons and Avars; Otto now bore the laurel-wreath of his victories over the Slavs and Hungarians. At the Lechfeld the victor had proved himself the saviour of the Christian religion

and of civilization, and imminent danger had brought almost all the tribes together to the battlefield. Otto saw in Charles his model. Why should he not take advantage of the hour? . . . He felt himself to be the instrument of God. He believed that God had assigned him the duty of preserving, as emperor, peace amongst the faithful and protecting the Church in its missionary task. The Roman expeditions undertaken in common had welded the German tribes into a political nation filled with a sense of power and of faith in a brilliant future. When Burgundy also joined them a Middle Europe was established under German leadership. Belief in the unity of Christendom, doubly ruled by a spiritual and a secular head, gave the imperial crown to the national State which possessed at that time the greatest degree of internal unity. . . . The idea of an indivisible Empire excluded the possibility of considering any division whatsoever of the medieval German kingdom.'<sup>1</sup> As long as the German emperors were superior to the Church through the investiture of priests and control of papal elections the imperial dignity exercised an integrating and powerful impetus. But when the papacy succeeded in establishing its superiority over the German emperors in the Investiture dispute, the German expeditions against Italy led to the disintegration and final collapse of the imperial structure. German historians have repeatedly posed the question whether surrender of the imperial dignity might not have been better for Germany. This problem need not concern us here, since history makes only such standards appear justified to us, as it itself produces in its course; the fact of the Italian policy of the German emperors resulted, when the papacy attained the zenith of its power under Innocent III, in the collapse of the German kingdom. The last great Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederick II, marks the end of a line of historical development. 'Under him,' writes Dietrich Schäfer, 'the German princes became territorial lords; the Empire dissolved into territorialities. . . . At the moment when France was becoming a unified State the power of Germany fell into ruins.'<sup>2</sup> One may, perhaps, be justified in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aloys Schulte, *Der deutsche Staat, Verfassung, Macht und Grenzen, 919-1914*, Stuttgart 1933, pp. 26 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Staat und Welt. Eine Zeitbetrachtung*, Berlin 1922, p. 135.

asking why it was the *German* emperors who made themselves exponents of the imperial idea, and why the French kings, with wise moderation, devoted themselves to the firm establishment of national unity. Considerations of political theory hardly suffice to answer this question. The root of the matter lies, perhaps, in the significance of the medieval German policy in Italy as an expression of that striving for the unattainable which seems, in fact, to be a feature of the German character—the attempting of the impossible in its despite. In France ecclesiastical universalism was erected into Gallicanism because France was confirmed in the Roman tradition. In Germany this universalism had to spread laterally, and so the German Empire perished in the conflict with the universal Catholic Church of the west.

With the increasing growth in later medieval life of independence and of complexity in the social structure, the imperial idea lost its integrating character. When the German kingdom crumbled, however, power did not go to the rising urban patriciates in the commercial towns, but to the territorial princes. How differently matters developed in France and England, where political unity was achieved in alliance with the *bourgeoisie*—in France in opposition to the feudal lords, whilst in England the aristocracy joined with the *bourgeoisie* and early succeeded in obtaining recognition of its rights from the crown! Yet the demand for reform of the empire was raised with increasing insistence. The last vigorous testimony to this which echoes down to us from the declining Middle Ages, indeed from the very threshold of the modern era, is heard in the treatise of Nicholas of Cusa (Cusanus), *De Concordantia Catholica*, which the young thinker presented to the Council of Basel. In it we find the demands of an ecclesiastical universalism very shrewdly united with the need for a strongly unified imperial power. The universal office of the emperor is regarded as being under the aegis of the Church; and in a very realistic manner the German Empire is denied any secular character *above* the ecumenical. The secular imperial ideas of Dante are foreign to the Cusan. ‘Who can tell,’ he writes, ‘what unrighteous innovations our age has seen and what things are defended with the greatest injustice!’

And all this because our secular and spiritual law has lost its power and there are now no guardians, no wielders of justice, and no shepherds. All these difficulties and dangers amongst which the empire moves must therefore now be carefully and speedily removed, in a systematic manner, for a deadly disease has overtaken the German body, and if no one comes to its assistance with a healing remedy, then death will result. The empire will be sought in Germany and will not be found, and the consequence will be that strangers will seize our soil for themselves, that we shall be divided amongst ourselves and shall come under the sway of a foreign nation. But there is no better path of precaution than the one we have already trodden and proved, and by this must we come to the reformation of the empire.' He then suggests that there should be annual imperial diets (*Reichstag*), a sure administration of justice, and, further, a standing imperial army 'for the defence of the empire' and to reinforce the strength of the law. A proud national consciousness speaks in this late medieval German treatise, but it was ignored by the Council of Basel. It deserved mention here, however, as a rare and moving testimony to the comprehensiveness of a man whom the history of philosophy includes amongst its greatest and profoundest thinkers.

Cusanus regarded God and the cosmos, the State and man, from a single standpoint. His thought circles round the axis of God-Man, herein making profound contact with German mysticism. But whilst mysticism attributes cognition of God solely to the inner soul of man (we have only to think of Meister Eckhart's *Little Sparks of the Soul*) the Cusan seeks also to penetrate the laws of external nature. Finite and infinite are both necessary elements of knowledge—*coincidentia oppositorum*! The circle is simply a polygon with an infinite number of sides. Here for the first time the ancients' method of exhaustion of the world is surmounted, and the infinite no longer conceived of as *me-on*, but as positive, as the instrument of a progressive human process of knowledge. Such is the meaning of the *docta ignorantia* of the Cusan. 'The consciousness of ignorance,' writes Ernst Cassirer, 'therefore conceals a deeper and more fruitful constituent of knowledge than any single positive contention, however appa-

rently certain; for if further progress in the latter is, as it were, barred and brought to a standstill, in the former the glimpse into the infinite is preserved, and the object and direction of the path illuminated. Infinity is now no longer the barrier, but the self-assertion of reason.’<sup>1</sup> The new world-consciousness of the Renaissance had appeared. The individual became the centre-point of the conception of the world—of course, still as the image and likeness of the Creator: ‘Creatura igitur est ipsius creatoris sese definientis seu lucis, quae deus est, se ipsam manifestantis ostensio.’ The Cusan’s conception of infinity reappears in German philosophy in Leibniz, where it leads to the formulation of the infinitesimal calculus. Cusanus’s keen sense of the individual likewise approaches the Monad concept of Leibniz, and, with the interpretation of the process of cognition as *becoming* (most probably as a continuation of the theories of Plato) a further fundamental characteristic of the German mental type was finally laid down. The *Concordantia* of the Cusan, however, vanished into the dust of history.

Not until nearly seventy years later (1495) did the Diet of Worms decide on the abolition of feudal law and the establishment of a supreme Imperial Court (*Reichskammergericht*) with an imperial president and permanent assessors; it promulgated further the first imperial tax of the ‘Common Penny,’ as well as, finally, an annual Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*) to which was entrusted control of finance, questions of war and peace, as well as supervision of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The Emperor Maximilian I, however, managed to avoid the claims of the estates of the empire by strengthening the position of the Viennese Aulic Council, thereby creating the separatist attitude of Austria to the empire, which was to exercise a strong influence on German history up to 1866. German State life continued to exist only in the territorialities.

Of fundamental importance for the further shaping of German history and the moulding of the German was the German Protestant movement inaugurated by Luther. When Luther nailed his theses to the church door at Wittenberg in 1517, he

<sup>1</sup> *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, Berlin 1922, vol. 1, p. 27.

certainly had no idea that he was kindling a movement which was to contribute vitally to setting free the modern consciousness of the world. Luther's purpose was to achieve a reform of the Church in its head and members. The religious conviction of salvation was to reside in the individual and in the Christian community, without the mediation of the Catholic hierarchy, which was becoming more and more addicted to external things. When we remember that the Cusan had earlier condemned the 'fat benefices' of the Church in his *Concordantia*, we may be certain that Luther was only expressing what lay in the general consciousness of the time.

Instead of the external means of grace which the Catholic Church had increasingly employed, Luther declared that the simple word of God in the Bible was the sole religious authority and means of salvation; and his great work of translating the Bible, in doing which he simultaneously created the new High German language, is to be explained solely in this connection. It is true that Luther rejected monachism, but 'he did not do so because he in any way acknowledged worldly values and goods as ends in themselves, but because he saw in such separation from the world an impermissible, because self-chosen, and external amelioration of man's task. He regarded the world and its ways as given by the Creator, and as the natural soil and postulate of Christian behaviour. . . . Humility, obedience, and trust in God—these should comprise our attitude to the world which we should accept with all its suffering as the punishment for our sins and as the order of God. . . . His is an asceticism which is no less an asceticism because it is not expressed as monachism, for it denies the world inwardly . . . without leaving it outwardly.' Such is the judgment of the profoundest scholar of Lutheranism, Ernst Troeltsch.<sup>1</sup> In his epoch-making work *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Max Weber has called this Protestant asceticism, as contrasted with Catholic asceticism, *in-worldly* asceticism. The Protestantism of Luther adjusts itself and surrenders itself to the ways of the world; Calvinism overcomes them 'to the honour of God in ceaseless labour for the sake of the self-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt*, Munich 1906, pp. 25 ff.

discipline that lies in labour, and for the sake of the prosperity which it produces for the Christian community.’<sup>1</sup> The active element of the reformed and Calvinist Protestant attitude made itself felt on a world-historical scale in the Puritan revolution of Cromwell, when it shattered the absolute power of monarchy; it spread across the ocean, stood godmother at the founding of the North American Union, and reacted back from thence on the spiritual forces which loosed the great French Revolution. Lutheran Protestantism, on the other hand, believed in the State and in authority. This aspect of it determined the development of social life in Germany for hundreds of years, down to the present day, in fact. Here, again, we can follow Troeltsch’s analysis without reservation: ‘The secular State and the modern idea of the State, an independent ethic of politics, were not created by Protestantism. It liberated the State from all legal domination by the hierarchy, and it taught that political activities should be regarded as direct service to God, as opposed to service to God by the roundabout method of first serving the Church. . . . Since the real aim of life lies in redemption and religious morality, there remains to the State only the character of a guardian of the *externa disciplina* and the *justitia civilis*, together with the utilitarian care for the material existence of its subjects, whereby it merely exercises the functions of a *lex naturae* that is subject to the decalogue. Over and above securing these external conditions necessary to the Christian life, its highest service is a service of love for the Church, to which the ruling power is obligated as protector of the decalogue that incarnates natural law, and as the most important member within the Christian community.’<sup>2</sup> The Protestant Church was compelled to ally itself with the territorial state in this way because there alone could it find the necessary protection. Material interests undoubtedly also played an essential part on the side of the princes in bringing about this alliance. Protestantism made possible the secularization of Catholic Church property and less money flowed to Rome for pardons and indulgences. By freeing, as it were, interests on this side, Protestantism promoted the beginnings of the capitalist movement, although both Luther and Calvin tended to be anti-capitalist rather than capitalist in sympathy.

<sup>1</sup> Troeltsch, *ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.



When the Catholic Emperor Charles V pronounced the imperial ban on Luther, the reformer was compelled to adhere firmly to the territorial states, and when medieval ideas of empire again sprang to life in the Peasants' Wars, Luther wrote his much-criticized pamphlet, *Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern*. This attitude, however, was a natural and logical outcome of the Lutheran conception of authority. The city *bourgeoisie* and the territorial lords sided with Luther, and Thomas Münzer died at the stake. Humanistic scholarship also urged Luther on to become its liberator from the yoke of Rome. On 11th September 1520 Ulrich von Hutten wrote to Frederick, Elector of Saxony, as follows: 'How unbecoming, shameful, and pitiful it is that the nation, which is the queen of all nations, should be subservient to any one, and an idle priest to boot! I, at least, am ashamed whenever I see the Pope in Rome giving orders to one of our princes. But he does so whenever he wills, and whenever it is to his advantage. Yet the princes are his obedient servants, as I see. You alone are friendly to Luther, whom every one has forsaken, and I think that you have hitherto protected from the wrath of the clerics a tiny spark which may one day kindle a most purifying flame. I beseech you to continue doing so. For it is needful that this be done, and in this matter we can place greater hope in no one than in you. For the Saxons were ever free men and invincible at all times.' Hutten then invokes the memory of Arminius who saved Germany from the grasping hands of the Romans. A thing of great significance here is the way that the humanistic mind made use of early German history in order to hold it up to contemporaries as a model and example. This tendency had already appeared in Cusanus.

A German national consciousness had arisen. But this national consciousness in the humanists already revealed clearly a tendency to free itself from any fixed political consciousness. The idea of power, without which there can be no political consciousness, was bandied in juristic discussions on how far the German Empire might still be regarded as a political structure. So subtle an historian of German political consciousness as Joachimsen remarks with truth of Johannes Althusius, that the way in which he 'adapted the constitutional conditions of the German Empire as

proofs of his system, nay, the very fact that he was able to construct a system at all out of the combatant ideas of Huguenot and Puritan thought without in any way criticizing German development, shows how widely academic theory had divorced itself from the political movement.<sup>1</sup> Two generations separated Luther from Althusius.

In the Thirty Years War Germany became the plaything of the European powers. In the nationalist-minded writings of Leibniz, the greatest thinker whom this epoch gave to Germany, we hear a decidedly patriotic note, which is, to be sure, firmly rooted in a cultural consciousness now entirely disconnected from political consciousness. The State, the empire, is, as it were, left to itself. Leibniz directs his attention to the care of the German language and suggests the founding of a 'German-minded society.' 'I want,' he writes, 'to set aside affairs of State and of war; for I believe that God will find a way for our welfare and will graciously preserve this empire as the head of Christendom; in this way the highest authority together with other monarchs and estates will also discover a means whereby German virtue may again be enabled to attain to its pristine splendour. But as to what concerns the mind and language, which is to be regarded, as it were, as a clear mirror of the mind—I believe that in this case every power must expound its thoughts; yes, it is difficult to love one's fatherland and at the same time see this evil without protesting.' Cultural and educational consciousness are here divorced from political consciousness. We shall have to consider the question whether they have ever merged since then.

## 2. THE RISE OF PRUSSIA AND GERMANY'S HUMANISTIC UNIVERSALISM

Let us first trace the development of political consciousness. It was the electoral principality of Brandenburg-Prussia which created the power basis for German political consciousness. Three outstanding rulers helped to make Prussia a great European

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Der deutsche Staatsgedanke von seinen Anfängen bis auf Leibniz und Friedrich den Grossen*, Munich 1921, p. xlviii.

power—the Great Elector, Frederick William I, and Frederick the Great. The Great Elector freed the territory of Prussia from its Protestant patriarchy: religion and ‘dear Justizie’ were ever the chief concerns of his rule—in this he was a true Protestant territorial lord—but very soon he proclaimed that truly Prussian sentiment: ‘Alliances may be all very well, but power of your own is better.’ Frederick William I, father of the great Frederick, took this sentence from the Testament of the Elector as guide for his own conduct. The army and finance were controlled with a strong hand. Officers’ corps and the civil service came to be the pillars of a new political power. But religion was no longer, as with the Elector, ‘the highest politica’; it was merely the foundation for a deeply felt sense of duty to the State. Religion may regulate the State from within, but as regards foreign policy he informed his successor that the Prussian State ‘has to preserve the balance of power in Europe.’ Frederick II did, in fact, carry out the dictum of his stern father and Prussia fought its way to the position of a European power in the Seven Years War. Goethe in his old age could write, when pondering over his youthful experiences: ‘And so I too was Prussian-, or, speaking more correctly, Fritz-minded: for what did Prussia matter to us? It was the personality of the great king that affected every one’s heart.’ The figure of Frederick became the symbol of a new national consciousness, yet the king faced the new cultural *élite* which embodied this consciousness as an uncomprehending stranger. Nor did he lead Prussia out of its inflexible estate system, and if he devoted great attention to ‘commerce,’ it was only in order to fill his treasuries depleted by long wars.

While Herder was collecting and publishing his *Stimmen der Völker* and was thus opening the gates of world literature to the German language, Frederick the Great was writing verses in French which merely made his correspondent, Voltaire, laugh. Prussia lived on the military victories of Frederick II until its defeat at Jena. When the Prussian army was repulsed at Valmy, Goethe noted in his diary: ‘From this day forth begins a new epoch in world history.’ The democratic masses of the French revolutionary army had forced the old states, with their estate systems, to their knees.

Let us now glance at the form and inner structure of German cultural consciousness at this period. The period from Leibniz to the death of Goethe (1832) is characterized in the main by four great intellectual movements: the German Enlightenment, the so-called 'Storm and Stress,' Classicism, and German Romanticism. The scope of our essay does not permit us to analyse these powerful intellectual currents in all their fullness; we can only indicate a few typical features. In doing so, we must of course bear in mind that any division of the intellectual development of an epoch is to some extent arbitrary, that the different movements overlap and merge into one another. Thus Herder, for instance, in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, is the continuator of Lessing's work in *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*. This latter again is unthinkable without Leibniz's theory of development, which implies that Herder is undoubtedly still of the Enlightenment school even though he paves the way, with his deep conception of the *Volksgeist*, for the Romantic movement that in its turn emphasized and passed beyond the irrational and naturalistic ideas of the 'Storm and Stress' movement, so deeply inspired by Rousseau. Again, in the person and work of Goethe are united 'Storm and Stress,' Romanticism and Classicism; and, finally, Enlightenment and Romanticism are 'raised' in Hegel into a new form.

With Kant's philosophy of criticism, the Lutheran Reformation was, as it were, *repeated* in the sphere of the philosophical consciousness. Kant himself regarded his *Critique of Pure Reason* as a Copernican transformation of philosophical consciousness. The consciousness of man became the fulcrum of a profound understanding of the world. The process expressed in German mysticism, in Nicholas of Cusa, in Luther's return to primitive religious consciousness, was brought to completion by Kant (of course with a strong admixture of the ideas of Hume and Locke) in a mature philosophical system. The philosophical consciousness of sovereign man shapes, nay creates, the world: 'But if all our knowledge begins directly *with* experience, yet not quite all of it therefore *originates* in experience.' In this 'originates' lies the main problem. By revealing the synthetic, *a priori*, non-experiential foundations of human knowledge, Kant gave to modern

philosophy its scientific basis. His was, in fact, a Copernican transformation: the traditional metaphysics of western philosophy were revealed. Yet the Kantian philosophy was no bloodless rationalism, denying other spheres of human life or seeking to distort them by rationalization. 'I therefore set a limit to *knowledge* in order to make room for *belief*. . . .' Knowledge was reduced to its proper limits. Man was not regarded as a means, but as an end, for the end of man is man himself: 'Two things,' Kant wrote in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, 'fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within*. . . . The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which, after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world—at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.'<sup>1</sup> Kant formulated the moral law of man in his Categorical Imperative, demanding of all human behaviour that it should be at the same time the moral law of a whole world order. In this demand for a world order, however, there is concealed the impulse to surmount the enlightened *bourgeois-Liberal* atomism which Kant seemed to share with Locke and Adam Smith. Thus we read in his *Reflections* of the seventies: 'The character of all government consists in each man caring for his own happiness, and in each man having freedom of intercourse with each. The duty of the Government is . . . merely to bring this about harmoniously, without favouritism, according to the law of equality.' In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), however, he writes under the profound impression made by the French Revolution: 'For each limb [of the whole body politic] shall of course be not merely a means but also an end in such a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. trans. by T. K. Abbott, London 1889, p. 260.

whole; and, seeing that it assists in making the whole a possibility, it should, conversely, be ruled by the conception of the whole as to its place and function.' <sup>1</sup> Kant, accordingly, still upheld the French Revolution even when his contemporaries had turned away from it in horror. For in his eyes all privileges of estate had been once for all radically extirpated by the Revolution, and man the citizen set free. Kant's doctrine of law, as Vorländer has shown, <sup>2</sup> repudiated all forms of serfdom, hereditary subjection, rights of primogeniture, and land entails. He regarded the aristocracy as 'a temporary guild authorized by the State, which must adapt itself to the conditions of the times and must make no breach in that common law of man which has been so long suspended.' Kant thus completely repudiated the contemporary Prussian State.

German Classicism merely carried on the world-citizen aspect of Kant's thought most fully expressed in his pamphlet on *Eternal Peace*. Humboldt's work entitled *Ideen zu einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen*, which was a direct result of Humboldt's own experiences in revolutionary Paris, and Schiller's *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, give complete expression to the classicist attitude. As early as in 1791 Humboldt wrote in a letter to a friend that 'the principle that it is the business of the Government to look after the happiness and welfare, physical and moral, of the nation, is the worst and most oppressive despotism.' <sup>3</sup> Humboldt envisaged the true aim of man as the highest and most balanced development of his powers into a whole. 'Freedom is the first and indispensable condition of this development. But the development of human powers demands, besides freedom, something in addition to, though closely bound up with freedom—namely, diversity of situation. Even the freest and most independent person, if placed in conditions that are all of one kind, will be so much the less developed.' <sup>4</sup> Humboldt, therefore, held that the State

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Karl Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, der Mann und das Werk*, Leipzig 1924, vol. ii, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen*, Reclam ed., Introd., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

should abstain from any action for the positive welfare of the citizens, 'and should take no step further than is necessary for their security against themselves or against external enemies; it should limit their freedom for no other purpose.'<sup>1</sup> The whole wide sphere of human culture was, in Humboldt's view, fundamentally divorced from the sphere of the State. Schiller, in the work above mentioned, came to the same conclusion. 'In the aesthetic State,' he writes, 'there is everything—even the useful mechanic is a free citizen, possessing the same rights as the nobility; and the intellect which bends the patient masses to its purpose by force must there ask his consent. Consequently in the aesthetic world that idea of equality is realized, which the enthusiast would gladly see carried into reality. . . . But does such a State in the aesthetic sphere exist, and where is it to be found? It exists in every finely harmonized soul; but as a fact it is only to be found, like the pure ideals of Church and State, in a very few select circles where conduct is guided by the beauty of nature herself, and not by unintelligent imitation of foreign customs, where man walks with bold simplicity, with tranquil innocence, through the most complex of situations without needing either to entrench upon another's freedom in order to preserve his own, or to sacrifice his dignity in order to please.'<sup>2</sup> The circle of the classicist cultural *élite* cut itself off from the nation: indeed, Schiller at that time denied that the German nation was capable of organizing itself as a State and wrote in the *Xenien*: 'Your hope, Germans, of forming yourselves into a nation is vain; therefore rather make yourselves into free men, for that you can do.'<sup>3</sup> Goethe, at that time, can scarcely have thought differently, as is proved by the fact that this verse is attributed to him in several editions of his works. The German humanistic and cultural idea of the world-citizen had taken the place of medieval universalism.

In the Romantic movement the German conception of culture exerted increasing influence in Europe. Romanticism pro-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, Philosophische Schriften, Leipzig 1906, p. 475.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe's *Werke*, ed. Karl Heinemann, vol. iii, p. 265.

foundly affected France: Renan was greatly influenced by Romantic philology, Taine by Hegel, and Bergson by Schelling. The young Friedrich Schlegel saw in the French Revolution, in Fichte's philosophy, and in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* 'the greatest forces of the age.' In the French Revolution the absolutist State with its estate system was overthrown, in Fichte's philosophy the human will was proclaimed absolute, and in the greatest of Goethe's novels the *bourgeois* philistine mode of life was exposed and life described in untrammelled and vital directness. The Romantics revolted against contemporary philistinism even in their private lives. A woman such as Karoline Schlegel must have set the quiet-living, rigid Jena worthies in an uproar! Schlegel's youthful romance *Lucinde* contains a love scene which can match any product of erotic literature the world over for its daring. Philosophic knowledge was advocated, in opposition to the systematizing, rationalizing spirit of the Enlightenment: 'It is equally fatal to the mind to have a system and not to have one. We must therefore determine to combine the two.' Schelling's active genius tried to satisfy this demand of Friedrich Schlegel. In his philosophy nature approached mind, and mind nature. Life (an ever-recurring idea of Romanticism) was to be understood and revealed in all its immediacy. For this reason Romanticism favoured the literary forms of fragment and aphorism, of which Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis were masters: they worked with intentional lack of intention. Intuition, or, as Schelling called it, intellectual intuition, became their medium.

Herder's doctrine of the *Volksgeist* was applied in a thorough investigation of the past: the world of medieval Europe was reinterpreted, fairy-tales, myths, and languages were explained as unconscious expression of the *Volksgeist*, and thus modern comparative philology arose with Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the brothers Grimm as its creators. Niebuhr and Ranke gave a new vision of history in their great works and a new historical jurisprudence came into being with the researches of Savigny. The English historian, Christopher Dawson, has written of this movement, which seems to have stirred him personally: 'To the men of the early nineteenth century, it was like the discovery of a new world, and it provoked a general reaction



against the whole rationalist culture of the previous age.’<sup>1</sup> Through Möser, Fichte, and later through Adam Müller and Gentz, the translator of Burke’s *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Romanticism was driven more and more to the consideration of political problems. As its ideas developed, it wholeheartedly adopted Burke’s criticism of the French Revolution. In his lectures on *Elemente der Staatskunst* Adam Müller wrote: ‘The French Revolution taught that one is bound to destroy the State if one wishes to deprive it merely of supposed antiquated non-essentials; that the reformation of a State has nothing at all in common with the sweeping out of a cupboard; in short, that one must penetrate to the heart of a State, to the mainspring of its movement, if one is to understand its character and to influence it.’<sup>2</sup> The spirit of the Romantic political thinkers looked back to the Middle Ages, to that epoch ‘of the greatest reconstruction of civic society which was the basis of the Christian religion’ (Adam Müller), to that epoch in which custom and law had not as yet been divided by an insurmountable wall. This return to medievalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century was not yet—as far as Germany was concerned—a flight. The organic political and social structure of the Middle Ages might still appear as a possible model in 1808; twenty years later, when modern capitalism began to take effect in Germany, Goethe and Hegel arrived, as we shall see, at a different conclusion.

The State of Frederick the Great split asunder under the hammer-blows of Napoleon. In 1806 the ‘Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation,’ by the resolution of the representatives of the Empire at Regensburg, vanished even in name. But the defeat of Prussia awoke national feeling. Men such as Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Boyen reorganized the Prussian Army, and in Freiherr vom Stein Prussia found a reformer of genius for its political reorganization: self-government was introduced in cities and provinces, and even the liberation of the peasants was begun as a result of the national disaster. Heinrich von Kleist and Fichte fanned national feeling to a bright flame. Students, citizens, officials, and sons of the peasantry answered their call.

<sup>1</sup> *Progress and Religion*, London 1934, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Kroners Taschenausgabe, Berlin 1931, p. 4 f.

In this way preparation was made for the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon and victory achieved in a succession of lightning strokes.

In Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* we encounter yet another attempt to fuse German cultural and political consciousness. The mission to which Fichte extorted the German people has an almost religious solemnity: 'And so let it be wholly clear to you at last what we mean by Germans. . . . The true criterion is this: do you believe in something absolutely primary and original in man himself, in freedom, in continual improvement, in the everlasting progress of our race? . . .' Those alone who have at least an inkling of this freedom are 'original men; they are, when considered as a people, an original people, *the* people simply, Germans.'<sup>1</sup>

The idea of the missionary destiny of Germanity (*Deutschtum*), as conceived by Fichte and as revived by the National Socialist movement of to-day, is clearly expressed at the end of the *Addresses*, which conclude with the words: 'If there be any truth in what has been expounded in these addresses, then are you of all modern peoples that one in whom the seed of human perfection most unmistakably lies, and to whom the leadership in its development is committed. If you perish as to this, your essential nature, then there perish with you the hopes of the entire human race for salvation from the abyss of its miseries.'<sup>2</sup> The historical philosophy of Herder was still European in outlook in that it made every nation of Europe contribute to the ideal of western humanity, but Fichte's position plainly involved a narrowing down and at the same time an overweening exaltation of the German character as destined to save the world. The profound patriotism of Fichte contained within it the danger of degenerating at any moment into a cheap chauvinism.

The Young Germans took the field against Napoleon, their national feeling aroused, and inspired with the hope of a better Germany. Actually the liberation of the peasants gave two-thirds of the population of Prussia their personal freedom, while

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Eng. trans. by Jones and Turnbull, Chicago 1922, p. 125 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 268.

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with the ordinances of 1808 the *bourgeoisie* achieved self-government under the supervision of the State; finally, in 1814, general conscription became law. The absolute feudal, authoritarian State had been obliged to capitulate in face of the necessity of the hour. But the democratic wave subsided when the German Confederation (*Bund*) came into being on 8th June 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon. The *Bund* was composed of thirty-nine states, among which Austria, led by the reactionary spirit of Metternich, took the lead. In September of the same year the Holy Alliance was founded at the instigation of the Tsar of Russia and was joined by the Prussian monarchy and the Austrian Empire: its political and legitimist spirit set its stamp on the decades that followed.

### 3. STATE AND CULTURE FROM 1830 TO 1914

Modern capitalist development, it must be remembered, did not begin in Germany until the thirties of the nineteenth century; in 1816, 78 per cent of the population of Prussia was still engaged in agriculture; by 1849 this figure had already dropped to 64 per cent. In 1806 13,200 wool-spindles were at work in Saxony; in 1812, 256,000. Between 1798 and 1835 the value of Prussia's mineral output as a whole mounted from 4,500,000 to 7,000,000 thalers. At the Frankfurt Fair in 1816 fourteen freight-wagons passed through weekly; the same number passed through daily in 1830. In 1819 Friedrich List founded in Frankfurt his union of German manufacturers and merchants 'for the promotion of German trade and industry,' at whose instigation arose the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*), which was followed in 1866, under Bismarck's leadership in the political union of the North German *Bund*, by the German Federal Customs Council (*Zollbundsrat*) and the German Federal Customs Parliament (*Zollbundsparlament*)—a decisive step in preparing the way for the political unity of the new German *Reich*. These few statistical data may suffice to characterize the beginnings of modern capitalism.

Its effect was to make a breach in the traditional mode of life. In his old age Goethe described prophetically in a letter to his friend Zelter the character and the dangers of the coming era:

'Riches and speed are what the world admires, and what every one strives for. Railways, express posts, steamships, and all possible facilities of communication are what the cultured world aims at, over-educating itself and thereby remaining mediocre. . . . It is indeed a century for capable men, for alert practical men who, possessed of a certain smartness, feel their superiority over the crowd although they are not gifted as regards the highest things. Let us cling as much as possible to the tradition in which we have grown up; we, with perhaps a few others, will be the last of an epoch which will not return again soon.' These sentences give early expression to the profound menace to human culture from the levelling and mass-creating developments of the capitalist era. Goethe was very far from belief in a progress that was as hollow as it was blind; he well knew that the achievements of civilization do not in themselves lead to human perfection—a conviction that we are to meet later in the young Marx, in Nietzsche, in Jacob Burkhardt, and finally, with typical emphasis, in Max Weber. In a spirit of sadness and resignation, Goethe wrote in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*: 'The conquering machine torments and troubles me; it rolls down on us like a thunderstorm, slowly, slowly; but its direction is fixed, it will come and it will strike. We think about it, we talk about it, and neither thinking nor talking can help us. And who would care to picture such horrors to himself? Imagine a number of valleys winding down through the mountains like that one you are descending; before you still spreads the beautiful, gay life you have seen . . .; imagine it gradually collapsing, wiped out—becoming a desert relapsed into its original solitude after having been alive and peopled for centuries. Two courses only are open to us, the one as sad as the other: either to accept the new and hasten on the destruction, or else to break away from it all and, taking with us what is best and worthiest, to seek a better fortune across the sea. Each course has its problems: but who helps us to weigh up the reasons which should decide us? I well know that there are some in the neighbourhood who are playing with the thought of building machines themselves and seizing the livelihood of the people. I cannot blame any man for thinking first of himself; but I should despise myself were I to plunder these good people

and watch them go away at last, poor and helpless—as go away they must, sooner or later.’ This unique document brings vividly home to us the feeling of the time with particular impressiveness. Only if the organizations of capitalist development might be reconciled with the preservation and promotion of human culture could one look with confidence into the future, and Goethe, it is clear, was far from having such confidence.

His contemporary, Hegel, who claimed that his own philosophy was the era ‘expressed in thought,’ held a very different view. Despite his doctrine of the *Volksgeist*, Hegel raised Romanticism to a new plane of philosophical thought. The Romantic position seemed to him to be too one-sided in opposition to the Enlightenment and he fused the two movements into a higher unity. His deep sense of the influence of the individual in history and his stress on the principle of development linked him with Romanticism, whilst from the Enlightenment he took over the principle of reason, which held as philosophically valid only that cognition which was clarified and given a basis by reason. Hegel’s picture of the universe is the last great universalist philosophical system in modern thought. In it mind and nature, culture and history, were equally permeated with the force of his dialectical method. The early capitalist era summed up, as it were, its heritage and its content in a typical manner. There has been no more universal German thinker since Leibniz. Hegel regarded the present as the result of an historical process which he explained as being an advance in the consciousness of freedom from the oriental world, through the Greeks, the Romans, the Middle Ages, and the complex of Romano-German nations. However much more precisely and more deeply we may see to-day into individual factors, we have scarcely advanced beyond the comprehensive Hegelian conception of a unified, western basic position. Hegel saw and clearly recorded the great stages in Europeanism.

Hegel regarded modern society as a ‘system of needs,’ the task of the State being to regulate these in a rational way, and he expressly emphasized the dialectical character of this modern society. ‘When civic society is untrammelled in its activity, it increases in industry and population. By generalizing the relations of men by way of their wants, and by generalizing the manner in

which the means of meeting these wants are prepared and procured, large fortunes are amassed. Conversely, there occur repartition and limitation of the work of the individual labourer, with consequent dependence and distress in the artisan class. . . . When a large number of people sink below the standard of living regarded as essential for the members of society and lose the sense of right, rectitude, and honour which is derived from self-support, a *pauper class* [Hegel's word for the proletariat] arises, and wealth accumulates disproportionately in the hands of a few. . . . Through this dialectic, a civic society is driven outside itself [that is, outside *that particular society*] to seek food and other necessary means of subsistence amongst peoples who are inferior to it in those commodities of which it has a superfluity, or inferior to it in industry, etc.' <sup>1</sup> Hegel published his *Philosophy of Right* in 1820. At that time the dialectic of civic society still seemed avoidable by expansion of world commerce. When, twenty-three years later, the youthful Marx began to work out his philosophy of history and society, this Hegelian dialectic had been exposed as an illusory dialectic by the actual course of history in the meantime. For Marx the true synthesis of the contradiction between *bourgeoisie* and proletariat as outlined by Hegel, lay in a Socialist order of society, whilst Hegel could still entertain the hope that the *bourgeois* State, as an instrument for realizing the moral ideal, would succeed in achieving the conciliation of opposing classes.

Hegel, in any event, clearly formulated the fundamental sociological problem of the coming capitalist era: how were State and society to be merged organically? That the two had diverged was clear to him. In his time their synthesis could not be imagined in any other way. But the fact that he posed the problem to which Marx was able to turn a few decades later, using Hegel's very words, is an indication of the permanent greatness of the Hegelian philosophy.

As a result of the headlong development of industrialism after the thirties, Hegel's philosophy—he died in 1831—came to be increasingly divorced from historical reality. After the Paris July Revolution of 1830 the overt influence of political Liberalism

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, English trans., London 1896, p. 231 ff.

in South Germany and the Rhineland grew stronger and gained learned exponents in such university professors as Welcker, Rotteck, and Dahlmann. The Young Germany movement of Gutzkow, Börne, and Heine, whose realism and biting satire unmercifully exposed German backwardness as measured by west European standards, contributed to make their contemporaries aware of the extremely reactionary and conservative character of German political and social conditions. In 1842 Karl Marx became chief editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne and was thenceforth closely connected with a circle of friends of his youth, all radical young Hegelians.

Political radicalism, which threatened the more to burst into flame because of the inadequacy with which the Prussian State met the demands of the time, united itself with, or rather was nourished by, the humanist-theological criticism expounded by the so-called Hegelian Left. David Strauss's *Leben Jesu* appeared in 1835, Ludwig Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christentums* in 1841. The Christ-figure was interpreted by Strauss as an unconscious emanation of the community, whereby he evoked a tremendous storm of indignation from orthodox theology. Feuerbach saw in belief in God nothing more than the self-assurance of man. 'The new philosophy,' Feuerbach wrote in 1843 in his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, 'makes man, including nature as the basis of man, the sole, universal, and highest subject of philosophy, and therefore anthropology, including physiology, becomes the universal science.' On this philosophy Marx took his stand, as also, after 1844, did his friend Engels.

The most radical organ of the Liberal opposition in the Rhineland, the *Rheinische Zeitung*, was suppressed by the censor, and Karl Marx left Germany with the bitter conviction that there was nothing to be hoped there. He worked out his new Socialist philosophy of society in Paris.

From Paris, again, came the impulse for the revolution of 1848 which broke out in Germany and Austria as a consequence of the Paris February Revolution. This event showed that the movement for a Liberal political constitution was not to be checked by police methods. *Bourgeoisie*, the middle class, and, for the first time in history, the Fourth Estate, advanced to revolutionary

upheaval. The Metternich era was over, even though but a few dream blossoms of the revolution were ever to bear fruit. The history of the Frankfurt National Assembly need not occupy us here. When, after long and hesitating deliberation, the National Assembly decided on offering Frederick William IV the imperial crown, the representatives of the revolutionary Assembly were met with a blank refusal. Frederick William IV based his refusal on a strong sense of his legitimist superiority, for he wrote to Bunsen: 'I tell you frankly that if the thousand-year-old crown of the German nation, which has lain in abeyance for forty-two years, is to be given away again, then it will be *I* and my equals who will give it.' In November 1848, the Prussian Liberal ministry of March was dissolved by a reactionary Government. The revolution was over. The Rump Parliament, which escaped to Stuttgart, was ignominiously broken up.

Civic freedom had been achieved in England by 1689, and in France a hundred years later: in Germany, however, the first civic revolution failed. The monarchy, the army, and the civil service—the legacy of Frederick the Great's Prussia—were strong enough to break the revolutionary movement. Although the capitalist *bourgeoisie* had been growing continuously since about 1815, it was still not comparable with the English or French *bourgeoisie*. 'It was the lack of numbers, and especially of fairly concentrated numbers, which prevented the German *bourgeoisie* from attaining that political dominance which the English *bourgeoisie* has always enjoyed since 1688 and which the French achieved in 1789,' wrote Marx and Engels in their analysis of the 1848 revolution, which appeared in 1896 under the title of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*. Lack of concentration of the industrial *bourgeoisie* went with a numerically strong petty *bourgeoisie*. 'In monarchist and feudal countries the petty *bourgeoisie* needs the custom of the court and aristocracy for its livelihood; the loss of this custom may ruin a large section of it. In the small towns a garrison, a local government, a law court with its complement, very frequently form the basis of the petty *bourgeoisie's* prosperity. Take from them these institutions, and the little shopkeepers, tailors, boot-makers, carpenters, etc., would be ruined. . . . This class is very fickle in its attitude. Humble and fawningly servile under a



strong feudal or monarchist Government, it turns to Liberalism when the *bourgeoisie* is in the ascendant; it shows vigorous democratic symptoms when the *bourgeoisie* has the upper hand, but gives way to pitiable terrors if the class beneath it, the proletariat, attempts an independent movement.' <sup>1</sup> At that time, however, the proletariat was unprepared, either in sentiment or organization, for independent movement, despite the energetic attempts of Marx and Engels and their friends to urge on the revolution. Finally, conclude Marx and Engels, in their analysis of the class forces at that time, the peasantry 'needs the guiding impulse of the concentrated, enlightened, and more active population of the towns.'

The State and society continued to be opposed to one another in Germany. The *bourgeoisie* remained the exponent of progressive, national ideas of culture, whilst on 31st January 1850 the Prussian State, in its royal plenitude of power, imposed a constitution on its subjects whose chief feature was the indirect three-class suffrage which remained in force till 1918. In 1850 the *Deutsche Bund* resumed operations in Frankfurt. The spectre of revolution had been laid. Otto von Bismarck became Prussian delegate to the Federal Diet (*Bundestag*).

From 1858 Prince Wilhelm, the 'grape-shot prince' of 1848, became regent in Prussia in place of the insane King Frederick William IV: in 1861 he became king as William I. He immediately came into conflict with the Prussian Chamber of Deputies over the reform of the Army. In September 1862 the Chamber, where an Opposition majority had sat since 1861, defeated the Government on certain items of expenditure. At the instance of the war minister, von Roon, the office of Minister-President went to Bismarck, who, in the meantime, had rounded off his political experience in Frankfurt and as Prussian ambassador in Paris and St Petersburg. Bismarck, inspired by his feudal-conservative convictions, emphatically declared himself at that time for the royal regime and against parliamentary supremacy, and left no doubt as to his resolve to govern even *against* Parliament if the supremacy of the king should be questioned. An open breach of the Constitution resulted. Bismarck prorogued the Prussian

<sup>1</sup> Marx-Engels, *ibid.* p. 7 f.

Diet (*Landtag*), and declared that he would govern without a constitutional budget. In this he naturally had the Prussian House of Lords on his side. When, thereupon, the budget commission reminded him that it was after all the duty of the Government to bring the constitutional organs of *Landtag*, House of Lords, and Ministry into harmony, Bismarck replied with heat that there were things more important than such doctrinaire, internal political discussions. 'The great questions of the day,' he said, 'will not be solved by speeches and parliamentary resolutions, but by blood and iron.' These words of the authoritarian *Machtpolitiker* horrified German Liberals. The memory of this period of conflict was hardly to be extinguished in Prussian and German constitutional life, while the breach between Parliament and Government could never be completely healed.

The war against Austria (1866) and that against France (1870-1) were for Bismarck inevitable stages in the founding of the new German *Reich*. Yet war as an end in itself seemed to him 'a horror, a crime,' and it is of especial importance to remember this to-day. After the Prussian victory at Königgrätz, the Prussian Chancellor urged a speedy peace which would impose on Austria conditions that were tolerable and not humiliating. This led to grave differences with the Prussian general staff and the King. But Bismarck achieved what he 'held to be a necessity in the interests of the Fatherland.' The North German Confederation with Bismarck as Prussian Minister-President at its head replaced the German *Bund* and the relation of the *Reich* to Austria was thereby clarified.

The Prussian Chamber of Deputies passed an Indemnity Law retrospectively approving army estimates which had been rejected during the period of conflict. The next step towards the unity of the *Reich* was the Franco-German War, which Bismarck, by virtue of clever preparations and with the support of non-Prussian members of the Confederation, was in a position to wage as a *German* war. The Prussian King became German Emperor. The Constitution of the North German Confederation had been Bismarck's work, and the new German Imperial Constitution which he dictated to Lothar Bucher at German headquarters equally bore the impress of his spirit. The unitary element in the

new imperial structure lay in the German *Reich* deputies, elected by equal and universal suffrage; this unitary element was balanced by the federal in the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*). According to Article 17 of the Imperial Constitution of 16th April 1871, the Imperial Chancellor was the sole imperial minister to assume, by his counter-signature, 'responsibility' for decrees and ordinances issued by the emperor in the name of the *Reich*. Yet this 'responsibility' was based neither on parliamentary government nor on constitutional monarchy, since eventual expressions of confidence or lack of confidence on the part of the *Reichstag* were not to be regarded as political functions. Added to this was the fact that the Prussian reactionary constitution with its three-class suffrage could always be played against any progressive tendency in the *Reichstag*, as it was the constitution of the largest and most populous of the German federal states.

Thus the unity of the *Reich* was indeed attained by *Machtpolitik*, and the way cleared thereby for unrestricted economic development, which latter did in fact begin, assisted by the French war indemnity.

A few statistical data will help us to visualize this development. From 1816 to 1871 the population of the largely agrarian districts of the *Reich* increased by about 91 per cent, whereas the increase in population for the industrial districts in west and south Germany amounted only to some 23 per cent. From 1871 to 1900, however, the increase in East Elbia amounted to 26 per cent, but in the industrial south and west of the *Reich* to 79 per cent. The process of development had been completely reversed. In 1845 there was only 2,000 kilometres of railway in Germany, in 1865, 14,000 kilometres, and by 1875, 28,000 kilometres. Mineral production in Germany for 1870-5 amounted to roughly 51,000,000 tons, valued at 473,000,000 Reichsmark; by 1900 it was roughly 174,000,000 tons, valued at 1,263,000,000 Reichsmark. In 1883, 165 German banks administered about 1,960,000,000 Reichsmark of their own and foreign money; in 1900 this had mounted to 6,960,000,000 Reichsmark. Finally, in 1871 there were only about 600,000 industrial workers, but in 1895 these numbers had increased to 6,500,000.

The massing of workers in large factories—in 1870 Borsig

already employed 3,000 workers in Berlin, and Krupp 8,000 in Essen—created a consciousness of class membership in the masses which found expression in industrial and political organizations. Bismarck observed this development closely and anxiously. His confidential negotiations, as early as the sixties, with Ferdinand Lassalle, founder of the German General Workers' Union, were concerned with a plan for yoking the workers to the royalist cause by means of general and equal suffrage. In the period of conflict Bismarck was ready to ally himself with any one who could be regarded as a definite enemy of Liberalism. Lassalle, naturally, had different aims from those of Bismarck; he envisaged a conservative Socialism in which the workers were to seize the power and rule the State by democratic means. After his death, however, the Eisenacher movement, led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht and directed from England by Marx and Engels, prevailed among the German working classes. At the Gotha Party Congress of 1875 there followed a fusion of the Lassalle and 'Marxist' workers' organizations. Marx's critical marginal notes on the Gotha unity programme were not published till 1891. They reveal strong objections to an act of unification that, in Marx's opinion, stood too much under Lassalle's influence. Marx objected to Lassalle's 'Iron Law of Wages,' which was in fact an economic fallacy; further, he objected to the characterization of the *bourgeoisie* as 'a reactionary mass.' Finally, decided emphasis was placed by the Marxian criticism on the close relation between 'free state' and 'Socialist society.' Here Marx formulated views which have been of great significance and consequence in the later history of the Socialist movement in Germany. 'Present-day society,' Marx wrote, 'is a capitalist society which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval additions, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. The "present-day State," on the other hand, is different behind each frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German State from what it is in Switzerland, different in England from the United States. The "present-day State" is therefore a fiction.' One should speak of *the* 'present-day State' only in so far as the different States are all based on modern *bourgeois* society. The only question

is, what changes will this kind of State undergo in a Communist society? But 'by combining the word "people" with the word "State" a thousand times we will come not a whit nearer' to answering this question. It was a question, thought Marx, which could only be answered scientifically. 'Between capitalist and Communist society lies a period of revolutionary change from the one to the other. Corresponding to this there is a period of political transition during which the State can be nothing else than the *revolutionary* dictatorship of the proletariat.' When, after the collapse of the Bismarckian *Reich*, the *bourgeois* democratic Republic fell into the hands of German Social Democracy, the latter regarded the democratic republic 'as the form of State irrevocably appointed by historical development' (*Görlitz Programme*). This thesis embodied the old legacy of Lassalle; but on the other hand Social Democracy was still convinced that it also represented revolutionary Marxist theory. Marxist theory, however, was merely the terminology used for agitation and party meetings, and in practice Social Democracy approved the democratic republic 'as the most favourable soil for the struggle for the freedom of the working classes and so for the realization of Socialism' (*Heidelberg Programme of 1925*). Thus two spirits co-existed in the bosom of German Social Democracy. It is a matter we shall have to return to later.

Bismarck believed at first that he could stop the Socialist movement by emergency laws. He was, however, as much mistaken in this as in his *Kulturkampf* against German Catholicism. However ably Bismarck's foreign policy secured Germany's dangerous position in Central Europe, his internal policy showed a lack of understanding of the signs of the times. He sought the alliance of Lassalle because of his hostility to Liberalism, but he was certainly also influenced by plebiscitary ideas which had dawned on his political consciousness after the 'eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon.' Not for nothing did he send Constantin Frantz to Paris, so that this clever and active young political theorist might study there the social-historical conditions of the Napoleonic *coup d'état*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for this my new edition of Frantz's work, *Masse oder Volk. Louis Napoleon*, Potsdam 1933, and the introduction there.

Bismarck's sociological conceptions are clearly expressed in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, written towards the end of his life. There he says: 'The greater prudence of the more intelligent classes may, indeed, have the ulterior material motive of preserving their own property: . . . yet for the security and advancement of states, the preponderance of those who represent property is the more beneficial. . . . Every great political community which loses the cautious and restraining influence of property-owners of material or intellectual origin will inevitably travel at a speed resembling that of the development of the first French Revolution—a speed that must shatter the vehicle of State.'<sup>1</sup> These words made it clear that the dynamics of social development were bound sooner or later to come into collision with the Bismarckian conception of the State.

That contemporary thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt, whose names were scarcely known to Bismarck, foresaw even then the destined end of the epoch did not trouble the great Chancellor of the German *Reich*: for what should the German State have to do with German culture? Nietzsche and Burckhardt, indeed, failed to bridge this gulf between State and culture, but they felt the rupture deeply. Germany was still intoxicated with victory over France when Nietzsche wrote his *Erste Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* (1872). French culture was not conquered, cried Nietzsche to his contemporaries in this brilliant pamphlet. The German victory was a delusion 'because it is capable of turning our victory into utter defeat—the defeat, nay the extirpation of the German spirit in favour of the "*German Reich*."'<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche pitilessly exposed the lack of taste and style of his day and denounced the philistine, *Biedermeier* ideas of one of the most celebrated writers of the time, David Friedrich Strauss, whose work, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, Nietzsche castigated with a sharpness and brilliance of language such as had not been heard by German ears since Lessing's fighting pamphlets. Certainly, the German war-lords had displayed their superiority, but the moral advantage of a stricter discipline might equally have been displayed by the Macedonian armies against the incomparably more cultured armies of Greece. 'It can only be a

misconception,' continues Nietzsche, 'to speak of the victory of German education and culture—a misconception which rests on the fact that the very idea of culture has disappeared in Germany. Culture is, above all, unity of artistic style in all the expressions of a people's life. Much knowledge and learning, however, is neither a necessary means to culture nor a sign of it, and in case of need may comport excellently with the very antithesis of culture, namely barbarism, with a lack of style or with a chaotic welter of all styles.' Here we find the old tension, that tension between culture and the State, reaffirmed as one of the fundamental characteristics of German social development.

Nietzsche's philosophy of culture approved the levelling tendency of the *bourgeois*-democratic epoch because he envisaged a new kind of man at its end—a philosophic vision of the future which need not detain us here since it exceeds the sphere of sociological interpretation and is to be presented and interpreted as a philosophical concept. In so far as Nietzsche's philosophizing remained within the realm of facts he revealed deep layers of human life and thought as few had done before him. We will deal here only with his analysis of the German character, which must be set forth in some detail since it supplements and continues our argument hitherto and, indeed, in a certain sense leads up to its conclusion. Nietzsche took as starting-point for his analysis of the German type of mind three great German philosophers, namely Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel. He speaks of 'Leibniz's incomparable intuition, in which he exceeded not only Descartes, but all who had philosophized before him—the intuition that consciousness is a mere accident of the imagination, not its necessary and essential attribute; that accordingly what we call consciousness is only a condition of our mental and spiritual world (perhaps a diseased condition) and is *far* from being that world itself. . . . We feel with Leibniz that "our inner world is something much richer, more comprehensive, more recondite." As Germans, we doubt with Kant the finality of scientific cognition, and above all everything that *causes* itself to be recognized causatively: the *cognizable* as such thus seems to us of minor value. We Germans would have been Hegelians even had there never been a Hegel, in so far as (in contrast to all Latins) we

instinctively assign a deeper sense and richer value to *becoming*, to development, than to what "is." We scarcely believe that the idea of "being" is justifiable and we are likewise disinclined to concede that our human logic, logic *per se*, is the only kind of logic. . . .<sup>1</sup> To this we add a passage from an interpretation of the German character which is linked up with Wagner's *Meistersinger*, and is to be found in Nietzsche's book, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.<sup>1</sup> 'Taken as a whole there is no beauty, nothing of the south, none of that subtle brightness of the southern skies, no grace, nothing of the dance, scarcely a will to logic; there is actually a certain clumsiness which is stressed, as though the artist wished to tell us "it is part of my purpose"—a clumsy drapery, wilfully, barbarously festive, a display of the jewels and lace of scholarly dignity—something *German* [our italics] in the best and worst sense of the word—something, as in the German way, manifold, formless, inexhaustible—a certain German richness and superabundance of soul which is not afraid to hide itself beneath the refinements of decadence, and which perhaps feels itself most at ease there—a true characteristic of the German soul, which, at once young and old, over-ripe and over-rich, still has a future. This kind of music perfectly expresses what I think of the Germans: they are of yesterday and of to-morrow—they have as yet no to-day.'

Nietzsche did not allow himself to be dazzled by the economic prosperity of the boom period, he was not concerned with the growth of the German share in world commerce and world traffic, he was too much a European not to perceive Germany's lack of a cultural present. His task was to form the future. The danger that the democratic era of the proletariat might slew over into authoritarian, plebiscitarian dictatorship profoundly shocked French thinkers of the calibre of Alexis de Tocqueville and Georges Sorel and left a permanent impress on their socio-historical thought, but in Germany it was a possibility realized only by Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt. Nietzsche viewed with approval this historical tendency, which he deduced from the period of Nihilism, because, Romantic as he was, with little

<sup>1</sup> I have given the preceding and the following sections in full, together with other passages from Nietzsche's interpretation of the German character, in my edition of Nietzsche; see also the introduction there. Cf. Nietzsche, *Kritik und Zukunft der Kultur*, Zürich 1935.



sense of juridical and political institutionalism in the historical process, he envisaged the coming dictators as heroes and geniuses. Burckhardt, on the contrary, even in his first great historical work, devoted to the period of Constantine the Great (1852), saw this coming era of 'terribles simplificateurs' as one in which some 'great handsome fellow with the talents of a subordinate officer' would introduce a new barbarism. Then naked power alone would rule and the whole culture of Europe—religion, morals, education—would be overwhelmed in its mighty waves.

But the voices of these great prophets echoed on unheard. The Bismarck period took refuge either in a thin and empty academic idealism or in Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy of the will, or fell back on such dull materialism as found typical expression in Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff* and later in Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*.

A decisive part in the formation of the German (as indeed in the historical shaping of man in general) was played by the educational system, to which we must devote attention. It will suffice to glance principally at the middle school, which grew out of the scholarly, humanistic sixteenth-century *Gymnasium* which was fostered by Melanchthon. It was not till the nineteenth century that the scholarly character of this central educational institution was gradually stripped away as the *Realschule* (modern or secondary school) won its place alongside the humanistic *Gymnasium*. The struggle of the *Realschule* for recognition, which cannot be discussed here in detail, lasted on into the beginning of the next century, and was waged expressly for the recognition of the exact sciences in modern life. Notwithstanding, this struggle never reached a clear issue. The German teacher of the pre-War period clung, for the most part, to his caste-like intransigence, resembling in this the German officer type. The German was thus moulded by a one-sided conception of knowledge which assigned to it a haughty superiority to all other activities of life. The same applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the German universities. Lichtenberg in his pedagogic aphorisms published at the end of the eighteenth century had already shown the dubiety of this fundamental attitude in German education. He was much impressed by the model character of the English system of educa-

tion. 'If I want to amuse myself,' wrote Lichtenberg, 'then I picture one of our learned fifteen-year-old boys in the company of a fifteen-year-old English boy back from Eton. The former in powdered wig, docile and ready to let loose a whole spate of learning on the slightest pressure, is in his opinions simply a bad miniature copy of his papa or his preceptor, a mere reflection, admired up to his sixteenth year, regarded with anxious expectation and silence during his seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth years, since during that time the building erected on so hollow a foundation begins to totter, and in his twenty-second and twenty-third years and thereafter a mediocre mind, and so to the end. The English boy, his bright curly hair over his ears and hanging about his forehead, his face sunny, his hands scratched and a graze on each knee, is always accompanied by Horace, Homer, and Virgil, has decided opinions of his own, makes a thousand mistakes but corrects himself, etc.'<sup>1</sup> Here life in its completeness is contrasted with the unfruitfulness of specialized knowledge. In Friedrich Nietzsche's<sup>2</sup> posthumous notes of the years 1874-8 we find the same warning, destined to evoke as little response as the cry of Lichtenberg. Only in a country where State and culture had attained *unity*, could education achieve an independent form. It is significant that in Nietzsche, also, German conditions of education are unfavourably contrasted with English conditions. 'The most favourable moment for a people to assume leadership in intellectual things is when the individual has inherited enough strength, tenacity, and firmness to make possible for him a victorious, cheerful isolation from public opinion; this moment has now reappeared in England, which indisputably heads all nations of to-day in philosophy, in natural science, in history, and in the sphere of discovery and the spread of culture. There the great men of science treat each other like kings, who while they call one another "cousin" yet demand recognition of their independence. In Germany, on the other hand, it is believed that everything may be attained by discipline, methods, schools—a sign that there is a lack of character and of the pioneer types who in all ages have struck out for

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lichtenberg, *Aphorismen und Schriften*, Leipzig 1931, p. 109 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nietzsche's *Werke*, Taschenausgabe, vol. iii, p. 438 f.

themselves. We breed the kind of useful workers who move together as if in step along the paths already prescribed for them in the days at the turn of the last century when Germany, through her wealth of original minds, possessed the intellectual hegemony of Europe.' But, as we have seen, it was those very 'original minds' at the turn of the century who nourished the idea of a cosmopolitan *humanitas* rather than those of a culture anchored in a fixed *hic et nunc* of political necessity. The completeness of the Humboldt educational reforms cannot be disputed, yet they lacked the crystallizing centre of a political organization founded, as it should be, on a cultural ideal.

#### 4. FROM THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC TO HITLER'S GREATER GERMANY

As long as the aged Bismarck himself steered the ship of State, Germany was at least secured against difficulties of foreign policy. On his retirement, however, the treaty of mutual guarantee with Russia was denounced, opportunities of agreement offered by England were let slip, and imperialistic world competition and naval rearmament finally drove England into the French camp: the encirclement of Germany became an accomplished fact. So began the World War, in which Germany employed her tremendous energies with amazing concentration.

When, after the battle of the Marne, the war in the west became a war for position, German diplomacy failed to control the German High Command. Opportunities of peace were lightheartedly laughed aside. The unlimited extension of submarine warfare finally brought in the U.S.A. also on the side of the Entente, and the brave German armies bled to death in the old German *hybris* of striving for the impossible.

In the November revolution of 1918 a *bourgeois* republic was founded, but the powers of the authoritarian State still survived in the general staff and officers' corps, in the civil service, in great industrial concerns, and in the East Elbian aristocracy. These powers checked the revolution. They sabotaged the German Republic from the beginning. It would be unhistorical to lay

the blame for this on Social Democracy. Social Democracy was, as had been clear since the Revision struggle, a democratic party of reform, whose revolutionary phraseology was destined only for domestic consumption. Max Weber, a penetrating thinker, had discovered this state of things by 1907.<sup>1</sup> In a speech dealing with Social Democratic influence on the political administration, Weber made the following fundamental criticisms: 'The one question is, which . . . has most to fear *in the long run*, *bourgeois* society or Social Democracy? I, personally, think the latter, at least so far as concerns those elements in it that are exponents of *revolutionary ideology*. That there are by now certain conflicts within the Social Democratic bureaucracy is plain to view, and if, on the one hand, the material interests of professional politicians, and, on the other, the revolutionary ideology, could develop unhindered, and if, further, the Social Democrats were no longer, as now, excluded from the *Kriegervereine*, and were allowed to enter the ecclesiastical administration at present closed to them, *then* serious internal problems would begin for the party. Then its revolutionary ardour would indeed be in grave danger. Then we should see that Social Democracy would never permanently conquer the towns or the State, but that on the contrary the State would conquer the Social Democratic party. I cannot understand why *bourgeois* society should regard it as a danger. . . . I should have liked to invite our German princes on to the platform at the Mannheim party conference, just to show them how the delegates below behaved. I had the impression that the Russian Socialists, sitting there as spectators, were horrified at the spectacle of this party! They had really believed it to be revolutionary, they had admired it as the greatest acquisition to German civilization and as having an immense revolutionary bearing for the future of the whole world, but now only the smug innkeeper face, the physiognomy of the petty *bourgeois*, caught the eye. . . . I think that no prince would continue to fear this party which has no real source of power, whose political impotence is manifest even to-day to all who choose to see. If the party seeks political power and yet fails to get control of the one effective means of power,

<sup>1</sup> Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, Tübingen 1924, p. 409 f.

military power, in order to overthrow the State, its dominance in the community and in public corporations and associations would only show its political impotence still more distinctly, and the more it sought to rule simply as a political party and not objectively, the quicker it would be discredited.' In these words Max Weber laid bare the principal problem which was to face the Weimar Republic a few years later. Its social policy was undoubtedly the most progressive that the last hundred years had seen, and no country in western Europe approached it. Undoubtedly, too, the freedom of the press under the Republic was so secure that it exploited its advantage to excess; but the foundations of the new State from the point of view of *Macht-politik* were out of harmony with its social and cultural tendencies. The Weimar Republic bore the seeds of death within it from the first. The *bourgeois* revolution came too late. A new era was already coming to birth.

Max Weber, again, was the first to see the tendencies of this new era. In his notes *Zur Lage der bürgerlichen Demokratie in Russland*, unfortunately not printed in his collected works, he wrote: 'Everywhere the framework of a new bondage is ready, waiting only for the slowing down of technical "progress" and for the victory of "interest" over "profit," in combination with exhaustion of as yet "free" territory and "free" markets, to make the masses tractable to its compulsion. At the same time the increasing complexity of the economic system, its partial nationalization or "municipalization" and the territorial magnitude of national organisms, is creating ever more clerical work, an increasing specialization of labour, and professional training in administration—and this means the creation of a bureaucratic caste. . . . Whatever spheres of "inalienable" personality and freedom are still unwon by the common people in the course of the next few generations, and while the economic and intellectual "revolution," the much-maligned "anarchy" of production, and the equally maligned "subjectivism" (by which, and by which alone, the individual has been made self-dependent) still remain un-

<sup>1</sup> 'Zur Lage der bürgerlichen Demokratie in Russland,' in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Tübingen 1906, vol. xxii, pp. 347 ff.

broken, may *perhaps*—once the world has become economically “full” and intellectually “sated”—remain unachieved by them, for as far as our weak eyes can pierce the impenetrable mists of the future of mankind.’ Have these mists cleared to-day? This, at least, may be affirmed with a fair degree of certainty: in states such as England, America, and France, where civic tradition has had long years in which to develop (in England since 1689 and in France since 1789), the main body of the people can successfully maintain its ground against the danger of the political forces of the State following the tendency of the means of production to become concentrated in the hands of the few. The values of human freedom and personality cannot be abrogated or levelled in these states by any conceivable future social organization because these values are inherent in the common people. Only if the organization of the masses in modern society can be brought into harmony with these fundamental values of western humanity will the heritage of Europe be preserved and assured for the generations to come. But in Italy, in Germany, and also in Russia, things are essentially different.

In Germany the after-effects of defeat in the War, of the inflation, and of the world economic crisis have significantly changed the social structure. The occupational statistics of 1925 showed that the proportion of manual workers in the total number of those engaged in earning their living had decreased since 1895 with the increasing rationalization of large-scale capitalism. In 1895 the proportion of manual workers in industry, manufacture, trade, commerce, and agriculture was 56·8 per cent; in 1907 it was 55·1 per cent; in 1925 it had fallen to 45·1 per cent. The number of purely industrial workers (excluding mining) shows, it is true, a slight increase of 12 per cent from 1907 to 1925; on the other hand the number of black-coated workers (*Angestellte*), that is, of technical and commercial functionaries in modern large-scale production, increased in the same period by 111 per cent. Comparison with countries such as the U.S.A. and England reveals, indeed, the same structural change, but the number of black-coated workers grew more rapidly in Germany than elsewhere. In 1925 there was one black-coated worker for every 6·5 manual workers, whilst in 1907 there had

been one black-coated worker for every twelve manual workers. This black-coated worker stratum is, as regards its mentality, very different in character from the proletariat; socially, it orientates itself 'upwards' and positively refuses to be placed on the same level with the manual worker. Its political convictions are predominantly emotional—'national' on the lines of the German high-school teacher ideal—and rationalist Marxist mass propaganda, which sought to attach the black-coated workers to their proletarian 'destiny,' drove them into the arms of any political movement that promised them a preferable future. The position of the other social strata, which we may collectively term 'middle strata,' may be summed up as follows. The peasants and artisans were until very recently still in the same condition as was depicted of them in Marx and Engels's analysis of class forces in 1848. The Weimar Republic made hardly any progress in educating the political consciousness of these social groups. Even in 1932 it was impossible to convince a peasant-farmer in eastern Germany that Chancellor Heinrich Brüning was not a Social Democrat. The middle class, which lost its savings in the inflation, strengthened the *bloc* of malcontents who faced the Weimar Republic with indifferent non-co-operation or with hostility. Meanwhile, from 1932 to 1933, unemployment figures rose to six millions. All that was required was the crystallization of these social groups about some powerful and resolute political fulcrum. Such was offered by the National Socialist movement, whose steady rise from 1930 onwards had brought it ever nearer to becoming a great force in the State.

At first, indeed, the big industrial and landed interests, together with the political leaders of the German general staff, thought they would be able to use the National Socialist movement as a battering-ram against the trade unions and Social Democratic organizations. These gentlemen believed they could easily deal later with National Socialism's claim to political leadership. But they underrated the powerful mass-basis of the new movement that had no fear of violence, and once the army was assured that it could get rearmament and general conscription under the new regime it withdrew to the sphere of military matters, leaving 'politics,' at least for the time being, to the National Socialist

leaders, and, when Hindenburg died, readily recognizing Adolf Hitler as his successor.

The history of the organization of German National Socialism need not concern us here. The Italian model supplied all the necessary lessons, for Mussolini had made his successful march on Rome in 1922, a year before Hitler ventured on his first revolutionary action in Munich. Hitler's profound instinctive understanding of the particular German situation is revealed in his subsequent decision to fight the Weimar Republic with its own and only weapon, the voting-paper—of course backed by a favourably disposed army, a neutralized police, and the ubiquitous presence of the S.A. and S.S. organizations, ready to strike in the most literal sense of the word.

The particular spirit of German National Socialism had already been created in the seventies and eighties when, as a result of Treitschke's pamphlet *Ein Wort über unser Judentum*, anti-Semitism became 'socially acceptable.' The Jewish religion, as the religion of a 'Chosen People,' had conditioned the cultural and social exclusiveness of the Jews in the long history of the western Diaspora. Torn from its territorial roots, Jewry turned to the mobile professions of trader and financier, and this produced a continuous conflict of material interests. With the beginnings of Jewish emancipation in modern Europe Jews joined the urban intelligentsia and linked their western destiny with the progressive movements in German social development: we need only instance in this connection such names as Börne, Heine, Marx, and Lassalle.

Following the economic disasters of the speculative period of 1873, anti-Semitism became for the first time a middle-class mass movement, supported by the 'Christian Social' political agitation of Adolf Stoecker. Even at that date, excesses of a violent kind occurred in west Prussia: Jewish shops were plundered, Jewish citizens were mishandled, windows were smashed, and in Neustettin a synagogue was burnt. Bismarck succeeded under Wilhelm II in obtaining Stoecker's dismissal in 1889. But with the attacks of a scholar of the rank of Treitschke, anti-Semitism became intellectually legitimized. In the writings of Gobineau, Renan, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the Jewish idea (as



Voegelin has set forth in his excellent researches) was stigmatized as a 'counter-idea.'<sup>1</sup> The political idea of German National Socialism was broadly determined by this 'counter-idea' of Jewry. 'The Nordic race, by reason of its rich historical material, is regarded as a race which has co-operated in all the great cultural achievements of the Indo-Germanic peoples, and the rise and fall of these cultural achievements is paralleled with the emergence or disappearance of Nordic racial elements among the culturally creative populations.'<sup>2</sup> This doctrine explains the renewal of interest in early German history and pre-history in which are sought a basis for present-day 'German' ideals and standards now blurred and uncertain through racial interbreeding. We need not occupy ourselves here with the dubious science of these notions. It only remains to point out in what way the 'counter-idea' of Jewry and its less sharply defined correlative idea, the Nordic racial idea, fit into the sociological theme with which we are dealing. Voegelin has formulated it briefly and aptly as follows: 'The peasant and urban middle class has been earmarked as the political field of energy from which to mould the community on the basis of the racial idea. On this system all the forces that imperil the political and social position of the middle classes are designated as an 'anti-Reich'—Social Democracy and Communism as political mass-phenomena on the one hand, capitalist large-scale enterprise on the other, and Jewry, since it has a leading place with each of these adversaries.' This sociological interpretation was published in 1933. Since then the National Socialist regime has undoubtedly taken into favour large groups within both the working classes and large-scale enterprise, using the counter-idea of Jewry as a means of welding these diverse social forces into an emotional unison against an imaginary enemy. Youth, especially, is being given a place, through school and youth organizations, in the new picture of the third Reich.

The race-idea, however, needs elucidation from another standpoint. The plebiscitarian mass-state and the racial idea are being associated in a definite way. In National Socialist writings, the *élite* and plebiscitarian elements are being constantly interwoven.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Erich Voegelin, *Rasse und Staat*, Tübingen 1933.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 219.

Whoever belongs to the Nordic race belongs automatically to an 'élite,' that is, to an *élite* more closely defined by the characteristic of the counter-idea of Jewry. This does not mean, however, that the mass-character of those whose distinguishing feature is the counter-idea of Jewry is in any way removed. In fact, this pseudo-*élite* is controlled by an actual beneficiary group which regards itself as the 'true' *élite* and which places the *Führer* at the disposal of the nation.

This ill-defined mixture of plebiscitarian and *élite* motives in National Socialism has a long and most interesting history which should at least be touched on summarily. As early as in Lagarde there was to be seen a merging of German Protestantism in a German State-idea that steadily encroached upon it. Alfred Rosenberg, indeed, expressly refers to Lagarde. The nation occupies the place of religion and thus the nation-idea receives that religious consecration which is noticeable to all readers of National Socialist writings but which we have earlier noted in Fichte. In Nietzsche, Spengler, Moeller van den Bruck, and George—involuntary foster-fathers of National Socialism—the nationalist motive is explicitly united with the idea of an aristocratic *élite*, with the contrast between the masses and their leaders. Let us instance a single example in proof of this. Stefan George expresses the contrast between the masses and *Führer* in his poem *Nietzsche*<sup>1</sup> as follows:

Blod trabt die Menge drunten, scheucht sie nicht!  
Was wäre Stich der Qualle, Schnitt dem Kraut!  
Noch eine Weile walte fromme Stille  
Und das Getier, das ihn mit Lob besfleckt  
Und sich im Moderdunste weiter mastet  
Der ihn erwurgen half sei erst verendet!  
Dann aber stehst du strahlend vor den Zeiten  
Wie andre Führer mit der blutigen Krone.

National Socialism has taken over the *Führer*-idea as fashioned by these thinkers, while almost completely stripping it of its *élite* character and combining it with the plebiscitarian mass-idea to form an anomalous mixture.

This new historical scene, with its emphatic stress on racial and irrational basic human motive forces, so explicitly formulated by Alfred Rosenberg, receives canonization in the authoritarian

<sup>1</sup> *Der Siebente Ring*, Berlin 1920, p. 12.

dictatorial State, which has always at its disposal the *ultima ratio* of terror based on force if social groups which have been forced into conformity should rise in protest. In such an event the plebiscitary guarantees possessed for the time being by the so-called electorate would be completely meaningless. This form of State standardizes culture, regiments it, and breeds it, using the term 'breed' in a strictly zoological manner. The content and criterion of this culture lies in reasons of State alone. Whether in such circumstances it will be able to maintain its European and humanistic tradition, seems problematical, to say the least. The laws of cultural growth are other than zoological. It must, however, be admitted that the culture of present-day Germany, regimented and 'bred' though it is, has in fact been brought into unity with the State.

The State, on the other hand, has to reckon with the tensions of the various social groups, which it can indeed hold in check, but which it can never of itself readjust by positive measures. Such readjustment could to-day find its economic and political foundation only in common European necessities, yet the National Socialist idea of culture positively excludes collaboration in the humanist European tradition. It is therefore obvious that National Socialist foreign policy must be opposed to the political valuations of the western democracies. Nevertheless Germany has found new allies, though Japan is far remote and Italy, as recent history has shown, is an uncertain friend and to-morrow, perhaps, a certain enemy. The annexation of Austria was the natural result of a policy based on racial claims and it seems doubtful whether the final aims of a Greater Germany are even yet achieved.<sup>1</sup> For the present, there is the danger that Germany's self-enforced isolation may lead to an explosion. On the other hand, she may succeed in continuing in isolation, as a dictatorial State with 'bred' and regimented culture, with the final effect of creating that new type of German whom Nietzsche prophesied as the 'barbarian of the twentieth century.'

But in the history of human culture there is no going back.

<sup>1</sup> The proof of this, if any proof be needed, is fully supplied by the present crisis [September 30th 1938] over Czechoslovakia, whose *final* outcome—despite the Munich Agreement between Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France—may render this whole book an Epilogue to a culture which is passing away.

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## POLITICAL THOUGHT IN ITALY

## I. MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ITALY

THE most political of great poets, Dante, marks for all who are not specialists in Italian culture the opening of the second great age of Italian civilization. The contests of popes against emperors, each asserting claims to be the true heirs of the Caesars, and — cross-cutting this rivalry—the defiance of feudal magnates, cities, and religious orders against either of the supreme powers, resounded through Italy; and from the evils of this strife Dante Alighieri drew not only the arguments of his political treatise (*De Monarchia*), but much of the theme of the *Divine Comedy*. Dante summons the politicians of his day to render account of their part in executing or spoiling the heavenly design for good governance of mankind upon earth.

For the Ghibelline (pro-empire) Dante, as much as for his Guelph (pro-papacy) contemporaries, the test of good politics was conformity with the revealed orders, or with the inferred designs, of the God of Christians, 'whose Will,' says the great poet, 'is our Peace.' As the relative power of pontiffs and princes has been assigned by Heaven, mere ambition to be powerful, or success in that ambition, is a vanity. Politicians seeking something other than the ends of Providence are as the many heads of the hydra, striving in various and contrary directions.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of that great age of Italian civilization, some three centuries later, Machiavelli, another son of Florence, propounded a theory of politics from which the providential pattern had altogether faded, leaving the will to power as the recognized motive of politics—a motive driving each agent towards different and conflicting purposes—and solid success as the sole political value.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dante, *De Monarchia*, i. 16.

That the subservience to divine ends proclaimed in the thirteenth century was often a thin cloak for the lust of power may be readily allowed: and some have believed that Machiavelli's praise of pure ambition was intended not to inspire the princes of Europe to ruthless competition for power, but to steel the hearts of his own compatriots to defend themselves against a ruthlessness to which it was folly to close the eye. But of the thirteenth century we may allow with a modern critic that 'The conflict between Ghibellines and Guelfs cannot be reduced to a mere play of interests or rivalries'; while Burckhardt's judgment on the politics of the Italian sixteenth century will stand for a summing-up of Machiavellism: 'Italy is the cradle of a foreign policy which later gradually came to take the place, not only in Italy, of a recognition of a lawful order in the world. The free, direct treatment of international relations, unhampered by prejudice or moral scruples of any sort, sometimes attains a perfection of elegant and grandiose appearance, but leaves the general impression of a bottomless pit.' Burckhardt's description of 'foreign policy' in the Italian Renaissance may be extended (so far as there was any such distinction in that age) to 'home policy' also. At the beginning of the second great age of Italy there had stood Dante, for whom the disputes of the political thinkers were the stuff (if not the inmost stuff) of poetry, a stuff woven through with religious sentiment. At the end of that age stood Machiavelli, offering (like Charles Maurras in the France of yesterday) religion as, to the prudent ruler, a bulwark of authority.<sup>1</sup> Beside him, his contemporary, the Prince of Renaissance Poets, had dissolved Church, Empire, Crusades, Heaven, and Hell into the art for art's sake of *Orlando Furioso*. Dante had admired the ruler who consciously made himself the instrument of Providence: Machiavelli and Ariosto offered Providence to the strong man as his instrument and plaything.

Cesare Borgia, incarnating this aspiration for ruthless, utterly efficient worldliness, perished amid the ruins of his ephemeral State (1507), while twenty years later Rome, in the high glory of the new art and learning, was pillaged and sacked by a marauding army. A generation of political writers arose who consciously disclaimed the ideals of 1500. 'The men of the second half of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, Chap. XII.

sixteenth century,' writes Carlo Curcio,<sup>1</sup> 'have no more desire to be heroes, demiurges, creators of worlds, or states, or works: but patient, calm reckoners, seekers after justice, truth, and maybe also their own advantage, by the checking of senses, passions, and instincts.' Ancient and modern history was revalued; the ambitious tyrant, though his name be Caesar, depreciated. In Tasso, the poet of this becalmed generation, poetry indeed returns to a historical, and indirectly to a political theme: for the poet aspired, in glorifying the crusaders, to call Christendom to arms against the Turk. Somewhat as Tasso's languorous verse distantly echoes the heroic trumpetings of Dante, so such a political philosopher as Paolo Paruta (1540-98) elaborates a subdued version of medieval political theory. For this mildly moralized political philosophy the relatively stable and peacefully working Constitution of Venice gave a model. 'Venice represented political perfection, the realized ideal of an order both durable and good and above all (what these political writers most wanted) capable of making her citizens happy. Numberless eulogies of Venice were composed in this age, almost all in honour of a political order so perfect, so good, so pacific.'<sup>2</sup>

Yet Machiavelli's exaltation of political enterprise and ambition, of *virtù*—the valour of the ruler in acquiring and conserving and improving his domain—rendered impossible a whole-hearted return to the medieval political values. The Council of Trent might recall ecclesiastics to theology and the cure of souls: but outside Italy the great national states, France, England, and (now at the height of power, and henceforth for some generations dominating Italy at either end of the peninsula) Spain, were swelling and solidifying. The Italians might have lost, or be in course of losing, except in Venice, their own political institutions, and be settling down to two centuries of subservience to Spain, Austria, and France, as direct rulers of half of Italy and patrons of petty princes in the other half, supported by a papacy which had failed to gain the political leadership in Italy, but had obstructed the path of any champion of national unity. But these same Italians, politically powerless and entering upon a relative economic decline, remained all the more for that keen observers of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma*, Rome 1934. <sup>2</sup> Ibid.

shiftings of political power and the changes of institutions. Those who had recoiled, or feigned to have recoiled, most sharply from the 'power politics' of Machiavelli, condemned the 'Ragion di Stato' (a term first heard in the last years of the sixteenth century) as a very principle of lawlessness. But Zuccolo and Settala found place both for a supreme moral law, by which the men of State must be judged along with the rest of humanity, and also for the 'Ragion di Stato' or non-moral, but not immoral, cultivation of political strength and prestige by the rulers of mankind. Benedetto Croce<sup>1</sup> sees in Zuccolo an important forerunner of modern political science. After Zuccolo, he says, the distinction of politics from morals was no more called in question—and the Italians of the second half of the century, prolific producers of detailed and technical treatises, turned aside from the great controversies briefly hinted at in these paragraphs.

## 2. FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CLOSE OF THE NAPOLEONIC ERA

A glance at medieval and Renaissance Italy was desirable in this sketch, for Dante and Machiavelli have ever been on the lips of later oracles of Italian political thought. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Italy, during which the country's political history falls into the main separate compartments of the Spanish and Austrian dominions, and of the States of the Church, Savoy, and Venice, were at once a period of exhaustion after the high activity of the four preceding centuries, and of preparation for the national unity to be achieved in the nineteenth century. Poets sustained, as a literary theme, but with a remote enough reference to practical possibilities, the complaint against foreign dominion and influence in Italy. But an ever stronger Austria, succeeding, in North Italy, to the heritage of a weakened Spain, and taking the Holy See under its protection, seemed to block the way permanently to any hope of a national unity like that of the other leading peoples of Europe. Austrian Italy (including the vassal state of Tuscany) enjoyed a subdued prosperity under a rule

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *L'Età Barocca in Italia*, Bari 1929, vol. i, p. 2.



neither inefficient nor inhuman: Piedmont-Savoy found stability and independence, if not prosperity or refinement, under its ambitious, rapacious dynasty: the kingdom of Naples (with Sicily) became practically autonomous.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century exceptional men in every part of Italy began to take serious notice of the thought and literature of those whom they had so long considered as pupils in all such matters—the French, the English, the Dutch, the Germans. A powerful and original Italian philosopher who met but withstood the French influences, the Neapolitan Gian Battista Vico, was to be adopted a century later as a national prophet: in his own age he gained little attention for his doctrine that man can have a true knowledge of human society (but not of nature) because man creates society—a doctrine which encouraged the few sympathetic students of Vico's profound but involved works to question the claim of Church, empire, and their dependencies to have fixed an everlasting routine along which all legitimate human conduct must proceed. Another Neapolitan, Pietro Giannone, confuted the temporal claims of the Church on behalf of the royal authority: the Inquisition managed, after a period, to get him locked up in Turin.

But the Italian political thinkers who got attention for their teachings, and were efficacious in preparing wide groups of Italians to expect political and social changes, were men who had readily accepted promptings from France and England; and sometimes, in turn, attracted a foreign audience. These Italian illuminists and utilitarians, grounding their arguments on the rights of man, and turning their aspirations towards the Greatest Good of the Greatest Number, were, the best of them, men of high critical intelligence, who, in transmitting opinions to which Locke and Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Adam Smith had assisted them, could sometimes enlarge or correct these.

These thinkers are utterly hostile to 'Ragion di Stato,' that is, as we may roughly say, to 'power politics,' but would be scarcely less impatient of attempts to tie down the politician to execute a predetermined providential plan with the saving of souls for its purpose. They conceive of humanity as having entered by contract into society, and as entitled to vary the contract in such

a way as to promote greater well-being. Several of them are keen students of political economy, and beginning to think of the ruler's task as that of securing a peaceful and orderly background for the efforts of the producers of wealth. In Milan Cesare Beccaria, greatly admired by Voltaire and Catherine of Russia, and the brothers Verri; in Naples Antonio Genovesi and Gaetano Filangieri were leading exponents of the doctrine that welfare is more important than power.

These philosophers were 'gradualists'; however much they desired the reform of the societies in which they lived, they neither desired nor foresaw the supplanting of their monarchs by any revolutionary power from within or without the State. Like the French thinkers with whom they agreed, they were for a monarchy strong enough to actuate plans for the betterment of society—for freer trade, for a shifting of the burdens of taxation on to the rich, for national education (Filangieri), against the death penalty (Beccaria). They desired an end to historic, but in practice unjust, privileges enjoyed by the nobility and clergy; at the same time they wished the monarch's powers to be not arbitrary, but clearly delimited by law.

Two poets, the first in modern Italy to rise high above the ranks of the literary craftsmen, lived just long enough to see the French Revolution and its first consequences in Italy. Each had in his way stirred the humane and intelligent circles of Italy to prepare for great changes. Giuseppe Parini, a Milanese ecclesiastic, in the mock-heroic poem *Il Giorno*, exposed the pampered Lombard nobility to ridicule and indignation. Parini pretends to be celebrating the excellence of the arrangement by which the labouring classes use up their lives to provide a surplus of luxuries for a few scores of nobles. The nobleman whom he damns with faint praise is, however, not a hidebound throne-and-altar man, but a libertine and a dabbler in French literature and English commerce. Parini thus sounds the note of proletarian, rather than of *bourgeois*, rebellion. Vittorio Alfieri, a Piedmontese magnate by birth, globe-trotter, horse-dealer, dramatist, and Hellenist by election, chose for his device the furious hatred of tyrants. Succeeding as a minor to great estates, he had suffered a tedious schooling and was impeded in his liberty of movement

by the court officials of Turin. Generously but childishly impetuous, he shared with his alert contemporaries a lively impatience for political change, without caring a whit for their plans of social amelioration. The French Revolution had scarcely begun casting down royal tyrants when Alfieri (a lifelong hater of the French) discerned that it was throwing up new tyrants. The tumultuous Alfieri thus appeared, at the commencement of the Napoleonic era of change and reform in Italy, a brilliantly eloquent denouncer of the new men and their methods, at a moment when Pietro Verri, the gradualist, was giving them a tempered approval.

Napoleon had soon overrun all continental Italy, incorporating Piedmont, Tuscany, and Rome in France, creating the 'kingdom of Italy' out of Lombardy, Venetia, and Romagna, and installing his brother and Murat as kings in Naples. The political thinkers of Italy were thus up against the task of evaluating changes which had brought into being a semi-autonomous Italian State in the most prosperous part of Italy, a French-dominated, but reasonably efficient and reforming, Government in the south, and direct French rule in Rome, Genoa, and Turin. Men of national spirit might long to get rid of the French (especially the Italian merchants, fleeced by commercial regulations for the advantage of French competitors); yet the French had brought great and salutary reforms where they ruled directly, and the vassal 'kingdom of Italy' was a field for Italian self-government in home affairs.

Pietro Verri had died in 1797; but for a time Melchiorre Gioia and Gian Domenico Romagnosi in the kingdom of Italy, Vincenzo Cuoco in the kingdom of Naples, were able to teach a liberal constitutional theory with the approval of authority. Dr Luigi Salvatorelli, who has analysed with attention their theories, shows Gioia and Romagnosi tempering with historical and psychological allowances their designs for a rational State. Gioia is for a representative democracy and a partial redistribution of wealth: yet would not have reforms attempted until public opinion demands them; and he believes that to inspire and satisfy the people, the leaders must appeal to instincts and to sentiments and habits, not merely to reason. Romagnosi sketches, in implied warning to

Napoleon, laws of social equilibrium with which the legislator's and the governor's practice must harmonize if the regime is to endure. The censor interfered with full publication of Romagnosi's arguments.

Vincenzo Cuoco witnessed all the vicissitudes of Naples at the turn of the century ('Parthenopean Republic,' 1799; British occupation and Bourbon restoration; monarchy of Joseph Bonaparte, 1806; of Murat, 1808; restoration of Bourbons, constitutional revolution, 1820; Austrian invasion, reaction, and repression, 1821), taking refuge and working as a journalist in the 'kingdom of Italy' when he could not safely remain in Naples. Cuoco had seen the lamentable end of an attempt to create, in the Republic of 1799, institutions on the model of the new French institutions. Several of the noblest men and women in Naples had wholeheartedly identified themselves with the republic, to perish (at the instance of Nelson) a few months later. Cuoco immediately composed an *Essay on the Neapolitan Revolution*, in which he argued that a revolution can only bring to maturity those reforms which a people clearly demands. Opposed alike to the Utopian enthusiasts of the Parthenopean Republic, and to the supporters of the dynasty and of feudal privilege, Cuoco demanded a monarchy to execute the will of the people—and found such a quality in Napoleon, of whom he wrote: 'Whatever good the Revolution brought about was due to Napoleon: for a revolution being in itself an evil can only be a good when it has been stopped: and Napoleon was he who with a strong rein arrested it, yet did not force humanity along the backward way of a counter-revolution.'

The third great poet of the age, Ugo Foscolo, must, unlike Parini and Alfieri, be accounted a political thinker and even a political actor. Born in the Greek isles, a student in Venice in the first years of the French Revolution, Foscolo was soon an eloquent agitator for an upheaval in Venice and throughout Italy. In 1797 Foscolo encountered a dilemma: the same Bonaparte who had marched as a liberator into Milan and earned an ode from the young poet, compounded with Austria at Campoformio, handing over Venice to the rule of Vienna. Foscolo composed his novel *Jacopo Ortis* on the theme of the grief of a young man for the

double loss of his love and his betrayed fatherland. But Foscolo was too ambitious, too much in need of a field of activity, to reject the opening which the 'kingdom of Italy' offered to Italians of energy and brilliance. At the same time, he had found in the philosophy of Vico, now resuscitated from oblivion by Cuoco and his friends, an evolutionary interpretation of history and politics, in which tyrants, though not good in themselves, appeared as instruments necessary to bring about changes, and the achievements of any political regime as triumphs over the restless, indocile, inconsolable nature of man. As long, then, as the Napoleonic order prevailed, Foscolo served it as soldier, university professor, and journalist—a life of tumultuous ardours and conflicts. Then, in 1815, he left Italy for Switzerland and England, thereby (as was later said) founding the national Italian institution of political exileship. As a youth he had plunged into revolutionary politics in the cause of that virtue and simplicity which (Rousseau had taught him) the kings and the priests had banished from the earth. But he was a disciple of Alfieri as well as of Rousseau: he admired heroes and aspired to heroism; and the arch-hero of Europe, who had given Italy a field, though but a small field, for the exercise of political energies, had taken his stand on a modernized throne and altar. A modern critic who gives great importance to Foscolo as a political thinker, Salvatorelli, shows the poet as renouncing the human affirmations of the cosmopolitan revolutionaries—freedom, justice, brotherhood—only to rediscover them as national affirmations. Indeed, so far is Foscolo from allowing the proletarian any claim to full citizenship that he prescribes for him as his political due *pane, prete, patibolo* (bread, priest, gallows). But the nation, he continued to proclaim, must be independent, and free. Singularly enough the Italian who thus directed his disciples (of whom Mazzini would be the greatest) not to pant helplessly for the rights of man, but to build up a national State as their contribution to the world, was himself of Greek race, and, as his biographer, Armand Caraccio, has shown in a recent article, was ready at the end of his short life to take on the full duties of Greek citizenship if the Greek revolutionary authorities could guarantee him an honourable livelihood.

## 3. THE BUILDERS OF THE ITALIAN NATIONAL STATE

For thirty-four years Austria again ruled Lombardy, with which was now incorporated the former Republic of Venice. The Bourbons returned to Naples and Sicily, assented to a constitution, repudiated their promise, and called in Austrian arms to hold down their subjects. The House of Savoy returned from Sardinian exile to Piedmont, and the Pope resumed his secular authority throughout the Ecclesiastical States. Metternich termed Italy a geographical expression.

In those years there grew to manhood, in the various parts of Italy, the men who, now in co-operation and now in conflict, were to build up the Italian national State, and to lead the parties which—almost until our present time—expressed themselves either in the exercise of power or in the utterance of protest through the institutions of that Italy.

The Austrians returned to Milan with, at all events, this claim to their subjects' admiration, that they had supplanted the Frenchmen. For a time several not merely servile political thinkers were able, in the *Conciliatore* newspaper, to disguise a demand for self-government under the form of maledictions against Napoleon; but the Austrians, warned by signals of discontent from all over Italy, were soon on the track of these subversives, several of whom disappeared into the imperial jail of the Spielberg. In Naples a secret society, the Carbonari, cherished memories of the brisker and juster administration under Napoleon's brother and brother-in-law; Sicily clamoured for administrative independence from Naples. The returning Savoy in Piedmont so resolutely attempted to put the clock back forty years that young men with an eye for changes occurring in the wider world could only feel the regime of their little kingdom (now enlarged by the inclusion of a reluctant Genoa) to be laughable. Tuscany, with an almost naturalized Austrian prince on the throne in Florence, was by comparison with the rest of Italy the 'Earthly Paradise': even there a Napoleonic party had some recruits.

The Savoy, however reactionary, were a local dynasty; and the

papacy, which now regained control of the waist of Italy, was certainly not a foreign dynasty. Those Italians who would not or could not retreat into the peace of their private lives, leaving government to the consecrated powers, might occasionally look to the Neapolitan dynasty or the petty prince of Modena to see if these would give some lead; but Savoy and the Vatican were the two Italian powers round which the dreamers of a United Italy spun their plans.

Machiavelli had held the papacy to be the bane of Italy: a power too strong to be absorbed, too weak to dominate the peninsula. But the papacy had maintained Rome as a world-centre, and Napoleon—wanting no rival to Paris—had judged it wise to drag two Popes away from Rome. Now, with Napoleon's oppression a recent memory, and a subtler interpretation of the Church's place in history spreading through Europe, the papacy seemed both a native institution and one of which Italians could be proud at the expense of those wealthier, bustling parts of Europe which might be centres of world commerce, but made no claim to be centres of world religion.

A disaffected court chaplain of the Savoy, Vincenzo Gioberti, who had experienced exile and conflicts of conscience, declared for the papal leadership of Italy in the book which grouped around him a whole school of sympathizers and disciples. The book, published in 1843, was entitled *The Moral and Civil Primacy of the Italians*; and the party, to which the new Pope (Pius IX) himself seemed to adhere, have been known as the 'new Guelphs.' Like the medieval Guelphs, they desired to have the papacy the headpiece of Italy; and Gioberti claimed to see far into the designs of Providence with which he required politicians to accord their actions. Providence (he said) gave various nations various tasks, but the supreme task to the Italians. Michelet was meanwhile saying the same of the French, Mickiewicz of the Poles, Fichte had said it lately of the Germans, and Milton long years before of the English.

The leader of a school sharply at variance with the new Guelphs (more loosely and generally called 'Moderates'), Giuseppe Mazzini, agreed with Gioberti in presenting his own programme, also, as a necessary inference from a providential design in history,

which design Mazzini, however, claimed to discern without the help of the Roman or any other Church; the intuition of the individual, in so far as it accords with the common opinion and universal tradition of mankind, gives the necessary guidance.<sup>1</sup> A moralist as fervent as any Guelph, indeed much more fervent, Mazzini despised those who made it the politician's task to work out the scheme which they held to have been revealed to the Church, instead of the ampler, airier scheme revealed to the searching soul; but far more he execrated those who would have made the immediate satisfaction of human desires, or the realization of their own ambition, the supreme end; and none was he to execrate more (nor be by any other more execrated) than Camillo Cavour, his contemporary and fellow-subject of the Savoy. Embracing and discarding revolutionary dreams in his student days, Cavour had the means to travel and a Piedmontese country estate to administer. He viewed Italy and the wide world as one desiring changes that might benefit the real society of which he was a member: before he knew whether he desired a united Government for Italy, he was agitating for a railway system and free trade; and while Gioberti and Mazzini agreed in giving Italy an exalted place in the favour and design of heaven, Cavour lamented the earthly inferiority of a country so utterly behind England and France in industry and efficiency.

Both Mazzini and Gioberti in the early thirties of the century had preached in similarly prophetic tones a religious, social, and patriotic renewal, viewed as an extension of Christianity to new ranges of thought and activity; Gioberti is in a writing of this period not less bold than Mazzini in proclaiming the future kingdom of God on earth. He takes the Church of Christ to prefigure 'civil unity, equality, and liberty'; the salvation of souls as a first stage in the way to a perfect society; and he denounces the Catholic hierarchy for mental torpor and political reaction. But Gioberti, maturing in long years of exile in Belgium, learned to exhort where he had so vigorously denounced. He appeared to open to men of goodwill a way to work for a new Italy, without rushing into conflict with their present loyalties. In his *Moral and Civil Primacy* (1843) Gioberti sketched his scheme for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Salvemini, *Mazzini*, 1920, p. 15.



a new unity of the world centring round papal Rome. Rome was to have primacy in Italy, Italy in Europe, Europe in the wide world. Three years after the publication of the *Primato*, the new Pope, Pius IX, was believed to have become Gioberti's disciple; when from the loggia of St Peter's he accorded a warm benediction to Italy, he was widely believed to have placed himself at the head of an Italian national movement. The Pope soon showed that his blessing expressed sentiment, not political energy, and when the uprising of 1848 in Vienna and elsewhere gave an opportunity for rebellion throughout the Austro-Italian domains, the Pope placed himself on the side of the old regime. Gioberti, who for a moment became the King of Piedmont's Prime Minister, recanted his plans for a papal presidency, and shortly after died. But a group of Piedmontese gentlemen, pledged to compass Italian unity, yet clinging tenderly to altar and throne, carried on the tradition of his maturer programme, through the decade of restored Austrian predominance. In their practical schemes, they came close enough to the followers of Cavour, with his devotion to order.

Mazzini meanwhile, though ready to address fervent exhortations to Pius IX, envisaged a religious renewal in the hearts and intelligences of mankind which should carry men beyond the need of dogma or priestly ministrations. With Gioberti, he claimed for Italy a special place among the nations as the seat of empire and papacy; but Italy was to assert that claim not by giving the Popes a new lease of world power, but by uprooting the Catholic Church and instituting a new civilization to radiate from Rome through the world. Mazzini, too, had his springtime of triumph as the virtual ruler of Rome (March-June 1849) when the Pope had escaped to the territory of Naples, and a Constituent Assembly had proclaimed the 'Roman Republic.' But for this time Austria and Pope Pius triumphed (the second French Republic, too, aiding) and Mazzini was driven back to exile. Ardent and indefatigable in his loneliness, Mazzini disseminated in countless pamphlets, letters, exhortations, introduced clandestinely into Italy, his summons to the Italians to shake off the yoke of kings and priests, foreign or native, and to establish a society in which each should willingly bear the part that was his duty. Re-

interpreting French history in the light of his own repeated disappointments with France, Mazzini opposed an Italian doctrine of the 'duties of man' to the French doctrine of the 'rights of man.' In the doctrine of rights and thus equally in classical capitalism and in Marx's Socialism, he saw a surrender to human instincts of conflict; for these 'rights' are essentially barriers set by each against the will of others. Now Mazzini was out to regenerate man by teaching him to guide his action towards the common good—by this meaning not divisible wealth, but a quality of communal existence. He fixed his gaze thus upon a transformation of human nature, like Whitman or Nietzsche, neither of whom, however, was generously illuded into demanding the immediate transformation of the institutions in which existing human nature has expressed itself. Mazzini's part as a political thinker was that of an accusing angel; the powers, however, were forced to reckon with him because (unlike another 'beautiful and ineffectual' angel) he trained himself in the arts of popular propaganda and conspiracy.

Gioberti, Mazzini, Cavour, and their respective parties, with Garibaldi to lead their armies on desperate ventures, built up the United Italy which half a century later fought the Great War at the side of England and France. While they lived they were rivals, competitors, even enemies, except at a few turning-points when they could see their common enemies spying out their weakness. Dead three-quarters of a century, they appear to have been allies in a single cause. Yet the parties they captained did not die with them; again and again the Catholic moderates, the mystic-moralist revolutionaries, and the polished, honourable gentlemen who revered the respective names of the dead champions checked each other in the work of unifying Italy. Only men of extraordinary skill in compromise and seduction, able to shed any prejudices or principles they had once professed, were able to govern this Italy in the first half-century of its union; while the young men who grew up towards the end of the half-century under such a regime of compromise and astuteness saw—most of the livelier and sincerer of them—a new hope of bringing political activity into harmony with the intellect and the moral sentiments. That hope was Socialism.

## 4. LIBERALS AND SOCIALISTS

In the view of Mazzini, who had sacrificed home and security to the call of his 'apostolate,' the men who assumed control of United Italy in 1860 in the name of Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, had snatched at a quick and easy triumph, and wasted the energies which he himself had summoned up for a far nobler task. A royal court, pluming itself on its own magnified brilliance, a Parliament of men concerned to enhance the prosperity of their own estates and industries, took the place of Mazzini's dream—the dream of a free Constituent Assembly of the people—when Cavour halted short of Rome and of Venice, coming to terms with those two supreme reactionary powers, the Pope and the Austrian Empire. Garibaldi himself, who in 1859 fought for Cavour as ten years earlier he had fought for Mazzini, now rounded upon Cavour with intemperate reproaches; but Cavour scarcely survived his own creation of an Italy that had gained freedom without relapse into anarchy and without bloodshed. Cavour too had his positive brilliant vision of the future: Italy under a parliamentary constitution was to throw off the impediments of cramping legislation and to follow quickly behind England and France in the march to prosperity; while the papacy, accepting the guardianship of the powerful new Catholic nation, would be liberated for a pure spiritual task. He did not live to experience the political and social disturbances consequent upon Italian fiscal unity (the old-fashioned industries of the south being ousted from their local markets) nor the long feud with the unreconciled papacy.

Meanwhile, though Mazzini might grieve and rage, the Piedmontese State of the Savoy dynasty had undeniably united the Italian peninsula by annexations later ratified by plebiscites, and rendered effective by regular and irregular garrisons. The ruling and law-abiding classes of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, of Tuscany, Lombardy, and of the liberated part of the Papal States, seeing their former masters fled for ever, quickly regularized their position by standing for election as deputies, according to the 1848 Piedmontese Constitution of French type. Only the

strictest clericals, taking the Pope's denunciations literally, withheld from the new State. But for a model of constitutional politics in working order, these slower-moving Italians of the sixties looked not so much to France of the Second Empire—pillar of papal intransigence—as to Great Britain. That country, in its unexampled growth to power and prosperity, seemed to have learned how to admit keen reformers to power under guarantees of social continuity: by the alternation in office of two parties, one the advocate of change wherever defects could be shown there in the existing order, the other the defender of that order against ill-considered change. Italy, then, seemed to need two clearly defined political parties as instruments of orderly progress. Cavour's earliest successors, strongly influenced, some of them, by the German dialecticians and in particular the Neapolitans by Hegel (acclaimed as successor and amplifier of their own Vico), felt themselves to be of this party of order ('thesis'), and to have assigned to them the task of withstanding, in debate and electoral contest, the pressure of the party of action ('anti-thesis'). And for ten years after 1860 each party had its plain divergent programme on a supreme issue: the 'Left' was for completing the unity of Italy by marching on Venice and Rome in defiance of Pope and emperors, the 'Right' for awaiting the opportunities of diplomacy and transaction. Here the parties both professed the same ultimate purpose but differed on method; and many of Mazzini's followers, less obstinately set upon perfection than their master, could feel that they made themselves heard, through the parliamentary institutions of the new kingdom, with effect.

When, however, the parties came to confront each other after the 'synthesis' of 1870 in the Italian Parliament in Rome, on what supreme purpose did they agree, and what alternative methods could they argue over? Austria, to be sure, still held two corners of Venetia, the Trentino and Trieste, and throughout another half-century the 'Left' and 'Right' could disagree on the importance and prospects of acquiring this last shred of Italy for the kingdom; but the 'Left' could not pretend that this was a crucial issue like that of whether to seize Rome from the Pope by main force, or to await an occasion for agreement. As, however, the

'Right' had not ruled Italy for sixteen years without bearing heavily upon the poorer citizens, the 'Left' could for the time being supersede them, in 1876, with a mere programme of relief to the oppressed. The Republicans, demanding a form of State to give expression to their aspirations after freedom and progress (entailing, the more practical among them claimed, a transfer of power from central to local authorities, with a citizen militia to replace the royal army), supported the Government of the 'Left' at first with great enthusiasm. But in the long run this 'Left' Government, or series of Governments, taking over the responsibility for keeping order in a poverty-stricken country, made up for any mitigation of military control over the country by greatly strengthening and subtilizing the bureaucratic control. The man remembered as the first of the 'Parliamentary Dictators' of Italy, Agostino Depretis, an old Republican, was ready to admit men of any or no political opinions to the 'Left' Government circle, provided they could bring support; and men of the 'Right' came over to him so readily that Depretis's successive ministries were soon quite evidently mere coalitions of men of influence ready to be guided by Depretis. Francesco Crispi, another ex-Republican, followed him: a man of far cruder and robuster temperament, ready to declare martial law, to quarrel clamorously with foreign powers, to scheme a grandiose conciliation with the Church, and to cherish the dream of an Italian continental empire. Such a man made political enemies; but they hated him and rebelled against his hold without pitting a formulated doctrine against his autocratic pronouncements.

Yet when Crispi, retiring discomfited by colonial disasters (1896), left the way open after an interlude to a general and his bayonets (Pelloux, 1898), opponents of this regime arose, not merely to condemn the man, but to propose a different mode of government with different ends in view. Zanardelli, who took office in 1901—and with several minor statesmen breaks the line of 'dictators'—held that the best Government was that which pressed most lightly on the citizens, and responded quickest to demands for relief and relaxation; that the poor and disinherited were due to enter on better terms into participation in a prosperity which freer trade and a more secure peace would progressively

enlarge—and not only into material prosperity, but into moral freedom, as they escaped the power of the priesthood. He had consistently, in a long political life, refused to co-operate with authoritarians, imperialists, and clericals; and now, installed in office, he promoted legislation to legalize divorce, to replace the import duty on breadstuffs by succession duties, and to subsidize the impoverished south with expenditure on public works.

Zanardelli failed to induce the Republican stalwarts to join his Government; but Republicans and Socialists were firmly on his side against any survivors of the schools of Crispi and Pelloux. For meanwhile the Socialists had begun to carry with them not the electors, indeed, but the youth of the country. From early in the nineteenth century Socialist pioneers had been forming groups in Italy, and a score of years before Zanardelli's regime Andrea Costa had been elected (for Imola) as a Socialist deputy. The earlier Italian Socialists, however, were evangelists rather than politicians; several of them gave up brilliant and lucrative careers to brave persecution, and, significantly enough, three of the best known of these sensitive, intrepid men ended their lives in asylums. The hard-headed school of Karl Marx had not, until the decade of the nineties, gained influence in Italy. Bakunin, Marx's formidable rival, had been the man to stir up Italian enthusiasts for an international revolutionary movement. His Italian disciples, like their Russian teacher, were members of the privileged classes who burned with sympathy for the poor and oppressed, and found in the idealistic philosophy of development a vocabulary for spreading the news that men had it in their power to unmake and remake institutions—the State and the family no less than the Church—which were but transient, provisional modes, and not patterns in which human life was by a higher power foredoomed to run. Here the Bakunist Socialists impugned the supreme values of the turbulent Mazzinians as well as those of the men of order. Yet in their presentation of Socialism as a new creed calling for political martyrs they appealed strongly to Mazzini's now disoriented admirers. But if these early Socialist preachers, skilled in literature and idealistic philosophy, winning hearts by their personal courage and integrity, might here and there initiate an uprising of peasants in protest

against some abuse or repression, they knew little of the factory worker's life and outlook. Now the factory workers of Lombardy and Piedmont by 1880 were numerous, and when, two years later, Depretis admitted literate adult males to the suffrage, certain energetic proletarians founded in Milan a Labour party (Partito Operaio) which would welcome none but manual workers, male and female, to membership, and for its programme was content with detailed claims of workmen for improved conditions. The Labour Party was contemptuous of academic teachers and teachings, and gave so little value to political party distinctions that its best-known leader, Costantino Lazzari, accepted money for electoral funds from a Conservative minister who wished to embarrass the political 'Left' (Republican Radicals). But in 1892 the Partito Operaio, which had meanwhile met with persecution, came to terms with the main group of intellectual and middle-class young Socialists, while the purist disciples of Bakunin broke off from these to found an Anarchist Party. The United Socialist Party thus endured, as a joint organization of trade unionists and theoretical Socialists, Crispi's repressions in 1894 and those of General Pelloux a few years later. Moreover, they were in agreement with the *bourgeois* 'Left' in condemning Crispi's colonial adventures in Abyssinia, his quarrels with Republican France, and his co-operation with Prussia and Austria (here the Socialists could join the older Republicans in a patriotic hostility to the alien power that still held Trieste and Trent). A 'Left Block' had effectively come into being. When Zanardelli took power the Radical Republicans were those of his active supporters who limited their desire for change to what the electors would endorse; the Socialists were in part working-class organizers of trade unions, in part young men who believed that 'science' had opened possibilities of plenty for all, which the working class could, stage by stage, force the Governments of the day to bring into realization. At that moment, a historian has said,<sup>1</sup> two political forces, a Radical Socialist group and a repressive group, for the first and only time in modern Italy, confronted each other and measured their strengths. Radical, Socialist, and, one may add, Masonic, Anti-Clerical, and Positivist

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Don Sturzo, *Italie et le Fascisme*, Paris, p. 73.

—or believer in natural science as man's one true guide to conduct —were easily interchangeable descriptions in the Italy of 1900.

In Parliament the Radical Government needed the passive support of a large 'moderate' group, especially of southern deputies, stewards of their landowning constituents' and their own interests before all else, unwilling certainly to assent to steep progressive taxation, and continually alarmed at the agrarian and industrial strikes which the Socialists, newly freed from persecution, were fomenting. Giovanni Giolitti (known as the third 'Parliamentary Dictator' of Italy) succeeded Zanardelli as a still more benevolent ally of the Socialists, but one who, like Depretis, and with still less scruple, was prepared to barter privileges and facilitations for the parliamentary support which he needed in any quarter. Italian agriculture and industry at this time were quickly prospering, and without increasing taxation Giolitti could extend copious subsidies to the Socialists' co-operative and friendly societies.

Historians of Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century have argued that the Radicals and Socialists of this period had no political philosophy. But was not this very neglect of theoretical reasoning about the State a declaration of opinion; namely of the opinion that they themselves, the democrats of early twentieth-century Italy, represented a generation interested in the wealth and well-being of individuals, and thus in the efficient running of necessary community services, production and distribution of goods; but a generation which estimated the doctor's, the engineer's, and the social scientist's contribution to society more highly than anything the politicians might achieve? And the growing trade of Italians with foreign countries, the growing migrations overseas, were activities of Italian-speaking citizens of the world, rather than of men and women living by and through their membership of the Italian nation.

At this moment 'the policy of compromise, contradiction, lower middle-class democracy, reflected on high in the figure of the king himself, but particularly symbolized in the figure of the dominator and *doper* Giolitti, produced a reaction, first among the few, then among the many—a reaction which in the Conservative wing is called Nationalism, in the other wing Revolutionary



Socialism. Revolutionary Socialism has the same task to perform among the proletarian classes as Nationalism among the middle classes.' Giuseppe Prezzolini in these words, written in April 1914, prefaced a volume of speeches and articles dating from ten years earlier, in which G. Papini and he himself had joined in founding the Nationalist Party. Thus, eight years before Fascism took form as a serious political movement, this volatile but acute observer had marked down its two sources as flowing in the same direction.

### 5. THE GIOLITTIAN PERIOD

From soon after the opening of the century until the European War Giovanni Giolitti captained a sufficient group of southern landlords and northern tradesmen to be able, with the help of the tacitly allied bureaucrats of the Socialist Party, to hold the parliamentary power, save for short intervals that were of his own rather than his opponents' choosing. His parliamentary opponents were, like himself, politicians more interested in achieving the next task than in its historical significance. They accepted as the existing and only conceivable rule that the vote of a parliamentary majority should be the legitimate and final word of command in the State. Only Giolitti far surpassed them in skill and unscrupulous determination to bind such a majority to himself. One of them, Sidney Sonnino, half English and of severe, Puritan disposition, departed so far from convention as to advocate, in a review article, a reinterpretation of the written Constitution of 1848, to allow of the king's choosing and dismissing his ministers regardless of the votes of the Chamber. The parliamentary majority repaid him with the qualification of a reactionary, although Sonnino had at the same time advocated universal suffrage. Not from Giolitti's rival Parliamentarians could come any effective proclamation of new political doctrine.

But those Socialists who chafed against the constraints of the working arrangement with Giolitti, and those Nationalists (a new movement now stirring, under stimulation from France and in response to the eloquence of Gabriele d'Annunzio) who outside Parliament denounced parliamentarism, were each heirs to a

part of Mazzini's inspiration—though Mazzini, from the heights of his social-national comprehensive philosophy, would have denounced equally an enthusiasm for merely social purposes and an enthusiasm for merely national aims. Meanwhile the heirs of Gioberti, also, were stirring in discontent against Giolitti's Italy. Gioberti in the decade before the union had summoned Italy to attain freedom and unity under presidency of the Pope, and thus to become an instrument for a Catholic revival in Europe, with not less unction than Mazzini's when he preached that Italy must uproot the papacy and radiate a new religion from Rome. Cavour—whose tradition Giolitti might claim to continue—had pronounced the formula: 'The Church at liberty in a free country,' thus dissociating the cause of United Italy from campaigns for either the renovation or the destruction of Catholicism. The middle-class families approved this formula; they collaborated with the State, but continued conforming to the practice of Catholicism, without heeding the orders of the Vatican (never more than semi-official) against Catholics standing for election or voting. Only the 'black' aristocracy of Rome and other large cities closed their doors, and the high clergy continued to look askance at the State. By the time of the Great War practising Catholics had asserted their right to be (in the fullest sense) politically active without rousing comment; the Vatican renewed an intimation against forming specifically Catholic parties, but only as a mode of disclaiming responsibility for whatever the politicians might say or do—politicians who were none the less sometimes closely inspired from the Vatican.

As towards the end of the century the Radicals and Socialists closed their ranks in a seemingly sweeping advance towards material progress and the betterment of humanity through science, the clergy and the Clericals manned the defence works of the Catholic system of restraints, and were able to defeat Zanardelli's divorce proposals. The Anti-Clericals denounced the Church hierarchy as hypocritical champions of the privileged and the oppressors.

And no doubt many Catholic politicians were content to think that 'the poor are always with us.' But Gioberti had, at all events in his later years, been no social quietist. In his last work

he had proclaimed three 'principles' necessary to the modern world (1851)—the supremacy of thought, the autonomy of nations, the redemption of the common people. What a biased and prosaic progress was Giolitti's Italy making towards the last of these purposes! Those who had throbbed to Gioberti's exhortations, like Mazzini's disciples, found Positivist parliamentary Italy set upon a merely material progress which all too easily, seeing the easy-going and indulgent moral codes of some of its leaders, brought enrichment to big industrialists and power to loud-mouthed tribunes of the people, but not 'redemption of the common people.' A Christian enthusiast would nowhere feel more ill at ease than in such a company of worldlings. In Fogazzaro's famous novel, *Piccolo Mondo Moderno*, the mystical aristocrat who had been Clericalist mayor of his town but had come to doubt his faith, turns not to the constitutional Liberals, who would have welcomed him, but to the Socialists (Fogazzaro is writing of the period before the main body of Socialists had themselves turned respectable). 'As soon as the property is sold I shall go to France to study—perhaps to learn to work with my hands. . . . It will be the first step towards serving Justice as I myself understand it. . . . My mother would have rejoiced to see me abandon a social class that rejects belief in Eternal Justice in order to escape the call to hard sacrifices, or else creates itself a personal God who is not too strict, a class that seeks only enjoyment, day by day. . . .' Like Fogazzaro's hero, the scions of some old Catholic families sought, almost despairingly, to marry their desire for redemption of the people with the traditional routine of religion, and, so far as their demand was merely for economic improvements, the Vatican itself gave encouragement with utterances like the *Rerum Novarum*. But they wanted the Church's blessing not only for social reform but for an absorption of scientific doctrines comporting a subtler valuation of man's sexual nature; and Fogazzaro himself was enthusiastic for psychical research. Thus against the secularist apostles of progress there formed up a Catholic Democratic movement (known at first on the doctrinal side as 'Modernism' until the Vatican denounced this as heretical, and the modernists proper dropped out), which competed against the minority of truly

revolutionary Socialists and the Nationalists for the support of young men in search of a purer, a more energetic, and above all a more dramatic Italy.

In the Giolittian period (so to term the first fifteen years of this century) the Revolutionary Socialists, the Nationalists, the Young Catholics were seeking out, testing, and discarding leaders for an assault against the big battalions of the established and contented of all persuasions with whose support Giolitti ruled the State. That masterly politician knew that to hold the extremists in check he must from time to time himself speak with their voice; it was Giolitti who (all between 1911 and 1913) undertook the Libyan War, for which the Nationalists had agitated, quieted clamour from the 'Left' when with a sudden change of view he introduced universal suffrage: and then achieved, for the first time in the kingdom of Italy, an understanding with an authoritative Catholic leader assuring him of the support of Catholic voters, against undertakings never publicly revealed.

But in settling down to a law-abiding gradualism, the Socialist leaders sacrificed the support of those who, taking a stand with Marx, desired and foresaw the emergence from among the dispossessed wage-earners of a new governing class that should throw the dominant *bourgeois* (and along with them the residuary feudal magnates, civil and ecclesiastic) out of their seats of power. In the seventies and eighties, well-born evangelists had preached to the workers a Socialism of freedom and brotherhood; at the turn of the century, men of more purely intellectual propensities entered public life as expositors or interpreters of Karl Marx. Early among these was Antonio Labriola, a professor in the University of Rome. Antonio Labriola introduced to the Marxian theories a young Neapolitan, Benedetto Croce, nephew of the brothers Spaventa, one of whom had been a philosophic inspirer, the other an eminent political leader, of the Italian Conservatives (or 'Right') of the first generation. Croce, who combined high intellectual energy with an evangelical inclination, for some years debated the Marxist doctrine in published and unpublished controversies with his compatriots and with Georges Sorel in France; but having, as he believed, discovered Marx in gross logical error on the question of profit, and in apocalyptic

superstition about the transformation of society in the twinkling of an eye, he turned away to elaborate his own aesthetic and general philosophy. Croce continued, however, with Gentile at his side, to attack the Positivists and Evolutionists who provided scientific authorization for the doctrine of cosmopolitan peaceful progress; he affirmed that Italians should seriously serve their own country in its vicissitudes of peace or equally of war; he would allow to economics the rank only of a 'natural' science, not of a philosophic science, and the ability to formulate only a contingent or (if more were claimed for it) a distorted doctrine. While Croce thus powerfully contested the right of professors to appeal to the 'laws of science' (whether economic, psychological, biological, or otherwise) in support of Radical-Socialist and Masonic Anti-Clerical policy, he firmly proclaimed that the artist and the thinker must do their work at a distance from the field of action, in which men meet and pit their strength against each other in the pursuit of necessarily partisan ends. His collaborator Gentile obliterated such distinctions; he would have the human spirit express itself exhaustively in the creative act—a philosophy which has been described as 'the theology of futurism' and was found, in fact, to provide arguments for insurrection and violence.

But it was Croce who introduced to Italy the French author of the *Reflections upon Violence*, Georges Sorel. Sorel's works have been acknowledged by Signor Benito Mussolini as the chief influence in his formation; the *Reflections* were published in Italy earlier than in France, and the young Socialist intellectuals found in it a satisfying condemnation of the prosperous smugness of the official Socialist leaders. Sorel had been allied with Croce in a close scrutiny of Marx and Marxian commentators. While Croce turned aside from Marx, Sorel pondered on what the prophet's work could mean for a generation which had seen his predictions so largely falsified. Sorel answered that one should seek the main features of the work, without poring too much over the details. Now what Marx came back to continually was the proletarian revolution to be; yet he could never give this great event a date or a likely location for its origin and spread. Marx's revolution, Sorel inferred, was a 'myth' in the sense that it

Christians the Second Coming of Christ has long been a myth. But Sorel proposed to give the myth a better form by preaching general strike instead of proletarian revolution.

The Socialist who turned from Marx to Sorel could no longer feel personally excused from taking part in the struggle, by the faith (which some of Marx's writings inspire) that the revolution must anyhow in due course come about, by the inevitable working out of historic processes which the master had foreseen. Sorel did not so much predict the general strike as call upon the producers—the active, creative members of society—to put forth their courage and virtue in the conflict against the merely consuming parasites. Such a conflict, pressed to the utmost, would tend to the form of a general strike. Viewed in this way (and the preceding paragraph follows nearly enough Sorel's own words) the French philosopher's doctrine was a diagnosis of perpetual divergence of interests between producers and non-producers, and an assertion that producers could realize their highest human nature only if they kept up the struggle, whether this meant transgressing the law or not. Sorel did not deny that producers and parasites were in some respects interdependent and apt to gain by collaboration; he did insist that virtue and valour were to be gained only in the struggle.

If Karl Marx had imperiously bidden his fellow-men to play the parts assigned to them in a predetermined, and to himself pre-revealed, historical conflict, Sorel enabled those who followed him to feel that they were themselves in a measure the shapers of the things to come. Sorel was in close sympathy with Bergson, and those who had found in Bergson's intuitionism a release from the determinism which nineteenth-century 'science' had seemed to require, found in Sorel at the same time a justification for a more spontaneous, adventurous mode of Socialism than that of waiting on the fulfilment of Marx's predictions, or plodding along with the 'inevitability of gradualness' perpetually in their mind.

In September 1906 the Syndicalist followers of Sorel broke with the Italian Socialist Party; but four years later they adhered to the General Confederation of Labour (Central Trades Union) which the Socialists had founded. The Syndicalists fomented a certain number of strikes; but the official Socialists kept the

effective hold over the workers. The Syndicalist intellectuals turned from active leadership of the working classes to composing attacks on the parliamentary State, liege to humanitarian cosmopolitanism and high finance. Georges Sorel in France had done likewise, and one of his disciples, Georges Valois, was now joining the ranks of the *Action française*. In Italy, too, the Syndicalists began to pass over to join the newly formed Nationalist Party. Federzoni, Forges Davanzati, and Maraviglia were among these converts.

Enrico Corradini, a Florentine man of letters, had initiated the Nationalist movement just after the Abyssinian disaster of 1896; Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini (already quoted) joined him for a short while. Corradini, an indefatigable lecturer, discovered in 1909 that Syndicalists and Nationalists had much in common. 'By the mouth of its leaders, Syndicalism is declared to be anti-democratic. . . . This declaration is of extraordinary importance for two reasons: it is the first declaration of the will to aristocracy since the French Revolution, and it proceeds not from the old aristocracy but from the manual workers.' Corradini examines what the Syndicalists really want; it is a heroic victory of the working class over the capitalist. Syndicalism is the imperialism of a class; but now, supposing this imperialism were in practice to operate not throughout the world, but within the borders of a single nation? 'The chief opposition between Nationalism and Syndicalism would disappear.' Five years later Corradini was more explicit: 'Nationalism is the Socialism of the Italian nation in the world. . . . The Socialists say that there is a system of classes constituting Italy that must be revolutionized to give the proletariat its proper place. The means to that end is the strike. The Nationalists say that there is a system of nations that make up Europe. This system must be somewhat revolutionized for the benefit of Italy. And they claim the right to use the means of war.'

## 6. RISE AND VICTORY OF FASCISM

While Georges Sorel from Paris was inciting the workers to find their souls in an austere, unflagging vigilance and combativeness against the parasites, a southerner of gushing, tumultuous brilliance, Gabriele d'Annunzio, was teaching the young Italians of university standing to dilate with the pride of mastery—mastery of nature through applied science, mastery of men through high-spirited audacity and of women through a striking of reckless or pathetic attitudes to give display to the mood of the hour. By turns glorifier of war and carnage, or of the new life open through Socialism, or through the wisdom of the east, d'Annunzio revealed the sensations to be enjoyed by the rhetorician in any cause; the Nationalist and the Syndicalist fresh from reading d'Annunzio might well feel more fellowship in the hot, overflowing eloquence which d'Annunzio taught them than in the divergence of purposes in their professed programme.

D'Annunzio in 1892 discovered Nietzsche, and for a time was herald of Zarathustra in Italy. Both the elegant world, and, in time, the Italian Socialists, took Nietzsche into their programme for conversation and controversy. Men of different ranks in society, and different or contrasting interests, affirmed that they were on the way to surpassing mere humanity; and poised in that ambition they would feel it but an accident of a shaky social structure, whether they happened to be here and now in a post of command in a movement for ousting capitalists from their niches, or in one for driving their country on to adventurous military exploits.

Such a man as Benito Mussolini, blacksmith's son and elementary schoolmaster from Romagna, as he came to get the run of the pages of Socialist papers, first in smaller and then in larger centres, loved to proclaim in print the dawn of a new humanity, robust, ardent, and morally emancipated, without dwelling on the equalization of wealth or the rational organization of production as characteristic of what he aspired for. To such a man—and Mussolini was the most successful in a generation of such prophetic freebooters—changing the world was the grand



purpose, and programmes were but the words of command to rally followers for the overthrowing of citadels. In Mussolini's early writings can be found incitements and aspirations after grandeur—grandeur on the scale of historians' memories and philosophers' dreams—expressed, or rather disguised, in terms of the programmes of the day which he took up from the groups in which he moved. (His father had been a local working-class leader of some prominence.) Later, Mussolini could learn quickly to adapt other programmes to be the vehicle of his eloquence—even, during and after the War, the programmes of Anglo-Saxon democracy, so similar in appearance to those of Italian parliamentarianism. (Mussolini, at a suitable moment, was as loud an advocate as any of the League Covenant, proportional representation, votes for women, and the free press.) In considering the present official political philosophy of Italy, the inquirer must ask, then, not what Mussolini has himself excogitated on the practical problems of human society and the State, but what elements he has allowed to be introduced into this amalgam, and why.

The Giolittian 'Liberal' parliamentary majority, bolstered up by the trade union bureaucrats and the mellow Catholic magnates, ruled Italy through the Libyan War; thanks to its master's timely concessions wherever a strong opposition gathered. But Syndicalists, Nationalists, and energetic men who wished to push past the privileged placemen into leading situations, execrated the master and his team, none more eloquently than a young historian from the far south, Gaetano Salvemini. The master judged well, in 1913, to allow another Parliamentarian to take over for a time the supreme office, a southerner of culture and eloquence, Antonio Salandra, more sympathetic to the Nationalist agitators, but no rival to Giolitti for the office of ultimate arbiter between the rival groups in the country.

Giolitti had every reason to think that he could return to office when he wanted, to win over, by some new distribution of favours, any faction which might be seriously interrupting the peaceful enrichment of the country, so noticeable in the decade of his control. But before he had staged that return, the forces of discontent which had long seemed for his advantage to check

and cancel each other, had grown close in the excitement of a great new opportunity. Giolitti, the stay-at-home bureaucrat, could not perhaps believe that his compatriots would ever be induced to risk their modest prosperity in a major war unless an enemy at their gates forced them to it. But now in 1914 the great European nations, to whose affairs Giolitti had only given a grudging heed, had risen in arms against each other. Giolitti was in foreign affairs a Triple Alliance man; he valued the help of German financiers and technicians in developing Italian resources; yet in August 1914 he fully approved of his successor's action in at once proclaiming neutrality—not the less because the Nationalists demanded declaration of war at Germany's and Austria's side. And his habitual allies, the southern landlords, the trade union leaders, and also the hierarchy of the Church were with Giolitti in holding that Italy should stay outside the conflict.

But now those who, from whatever quarter, had long impotently competed against the Giolittian placemen, began to find that they could agitate far more effectively for Italian intervention in the War on the side of the western powers, than for any of the hypothetical purposes hitherto formulated in their literature. In this pro-war or 'interventionist' movement there came together many restless spirits who had lately been competitors and rivals—the followers of Corradini, army officers desiring to show their mettle and to gain prestige, ambitious professors of history, eloquent journalists; Republicans and Radicals who thought they could assimilate Italy to France by a sisterhood at arms; some of the Catholic Democrats; Syndicalists and Anarchists who planned to lead the nation to war with a view to be then in command for purposes of peace. Closely allied to the latter (though still an office-holder in the official Socialist Party) came Benito Mussolini, famous fomenter of strikes and police-baiter, while from Paris (where he had for some years retired to a life of elegance) d'Annunzio arrived, bursting with rhetoric about Latin fraternity. Each of the contending alliances in Europe was now at work in Italy financing journals and journalists, Prince Bülow labouring to win the press for neutrality, Barrès for intervention. From one day to another Benito Mussolini initiated a new daily paper to advocate war at the side of France, the *Popolo d'Italia*—

Socialist daily, with these two mottoes on the title-page: 'He who is armed is fed' (Blanqui), and 'The Revolution is an idea that has procured bayonets' (Napoleon).

The landlords of the south, the bankers, the high clergy, the Socialist bureaucrats held to Giolitti; and Giolitti, who saw in the European War a wonderful chance for Italy to prosper as a neutral, and to acquire territories from Austria without striking a blow, as the price of neutrality, made ready (May 1915) to supplant Salandra. But meanwhile, Salandra and his colleague Sonnino had made friends where the domestic-minded Giolitti had no seducing favours to offer and no means of interfering—in the governing circles of England and France. The king and the court, also, who had carried little weight in home affairs, were much less dependent on their parliamentary advisers in international affairs; and the Queen of Italy, a Montenegrin, ranked almost as a Russian princess. Salandra, strong in his European attachments and in the royal support, made bold to resist Giolitti; the motley crowd of interventionists raised noisy demonstrations in favour of Salandra, while d'Annunzio roared torrential and pestilential invectives against Giolitti. While Parliament was not sitting, Salandra offered the king his resignation; the king, though notified that Giolitti could command a majority to defeat Salandra, refused the resignation. And now Salandra summoned Parliament while droves of agitators thronged Rome, threatening death to Giolitti and to those who should refuse confidence to Salandra. Intimidated, the Parliamentarians accorded Salandra their support without a division. The interventionists, small groups of extremists and eccentrics, six months earlier each others' sworn foes, had overthrown the third parliamentary dictator, who six months earlier had seemed eternal and immobile.

Henri Bergson, in a wartime essay, attempted to show the Entente Powers as incarnating his intuitionist philosophy in conflict with the determinism of the Central Powers. In Italy, at all events, the most self-conscious interventionists might feel that in them a freely roving instinct had got the better of a system. In such a vein of thought Mussolini during the War quoted Machiavelli: 'Some men have had nothing in their favour but an opportunity which gave them a material that they might mould to

their own inclination; save for that opportunity the valour of their mind would have been extinguished; and save for that valour the opportunity would have been wasted.' And to Maeterlinck Mussolini in the same speech attributed the view that there is a mechanical determinism in the world, but that the individual may resist it.

The parliamentary system meanwhile appeared to go on; other prime ministers followed Salandra, taking office with the toleration of the cowed majority. But as the armies in the field fought on, achieving no conclusive victories, and, in 1917, yielding a province of Italy to the Austrian foe, the Parliamentarians found courage to murmur; the official Socialists pressed openly for an end to the War. The interventionists retorted, denouncing them as traitors, while with British and French help the Italian armies recovered and pressed back the enemy. Mussolini, invalided back from the War, called for a Clemenceau to punish and smite those who, behind the backs of the fighting men, still called in question the value of the War.

But ere at last the victorious Entente had humbled the Central Powers, the interventionist groups had almost lost their hold over the Parliamentarians; these had found new strength, as against the war-makers they voiced the claims of the common man to return to his house and family, and to resume the tasks of daily life. To keep the country in the War, the War party on its side must needs promise the people, as the reward of victory, those very blessings which the peace party had desired to preserve by abstention—peace, prosperity, and progress. President Wilson gave them a lead; and immediately after the end of the War Mussolini (January 1919) devoted a special number of the *Popolo d'Italia* to Wilson, 'Prophet of the Peoples,' writing himself, shortly after: 'Italy is Wilsonian to a man. Italy is the least imperialist of the peoples.' But if President Wilson offered plans for perpetual peace, he demanded from Italy a contribution which the interventionists would not give—the renunciation of the Dalmatian coast and, above all, of the Italian or semi-Italian port of Fiume. As Great Britain and France were adding largely to their oversea empires out of the spoils of war, while Italy gained no such accretion, the Italians waxed exceedingly wrathful at this

check to the complete absorption of men of Italian language in the kingdom. D'Annunzio, who at sixty years of age had turned fighting aviator, captained a legion of ex-soldiers and invaded and captured Fiume, defying the Supreme Allied Council and their own Government. Established in Fiume, he snorted insults at the Roman Parliament. But almost in the same month, in the first general elections since 1913, the official Socialists came back to that Parliament 150 strong (against 40), and the new Catholic Popular Party, expressing social rather than national aspirations, 100 strong; the old majority 'Liberals' (bearing the responsibility of the War most of them had not wanted) held precariously to a third of the seats.

In the name of what principles or purposes did the Socialists now take a commanding position in the Chamber? Before the War they had, as a party, bartered tacit support to the parliamentary dictator in return for material concessions; during the War they had, like the Giolittians, like the Clericals, like all the established political forces, remained cowed by the interventionists. Were they now to lead the country back to the old rhythm of slow social and economic advance which they had not wished to be disturbed? They must then frankly declare themselves the partisans of conservation, even almost of reaction. And this the Russian example made it impossible for them to do. For the Russian Socialists, terminating the War in 1917 and gaining control of their country in that revolutionary upheaval, had roused hopes of a similar end to the Italian war among the men in the trenches and their families at home. And though the War was now concluded in another wise, an unsilenceable Communist group within the Socialist Party loudly and lustily recalled the party to the revolutionary creed of Marx. In vain the Syndicalists of 1900, following Croce and Sorel, had relegated Marx to the dustiest bookshelves; for now the Syndicalists had entered into the Nationalist warmongering combine, and were considered enemies. The Communists called for a return to Marx as the one authentic prophet of a better world for workers.

Not all the Communist leaders (though no doubt some of them) were mere profiteers by the confusion of the times, or parrot-natured dogmatists. A deeply meditative young professor,

crippled from birth and ailing, Antonio Gramsci, took up residence at Turin in the years when the 'Fiat' motor works were expanding into a great armament concern. As Gramsci watched the workers drawn in by thousands into this elaborately organized productive regiment, he glimpsed a future society in which men and women would live chiefly as members of such great productive societies, but self-governing, not owner-governed. He watched the factory councils elected by the workmen in many factories, destined (he thought) to be units of a new economic organization which he believed that Marx had foreseen. But Gramsci was outstanding as one of the few Communist leaders who agitated for a revolution in a direction which he had himself explored. For the rest, the Communists were calling continually for an imitation of the Russian upheaval in a country that was now not at war, and not an absolute monarchy, while its mature revolutionaries saluted the national and not the Red Flag. But the Communists were successful in bringing thousands, perhaps millions, of working people to believe in Communist Russia as the worker's spiritual home, to match which they must sooner or later remodel Italy through revolution.

Against the Russian 'myth' the war parties set the 'myth' of Fiume. In that counter-paradise d'Annunzio had promulgated a 'Constitution' for the 'Regency of Quarnaro,' whose fifty thousand inhabitants he was now ruling with the help of his legionaries and with his aesthetic sympathizers, the Futurists. The Fiume Constitution asserted that the State of Fiume recognizes property not as 'absolute power over things, but as the most useful of social functions'; that 'a lazy owner will not be allowed to leave his property unexploited,' and that 'the only legitimate title to property is work.' Meanwhile all workers were to be enrolled in one of ten vocational corporations. Not only would the corporations collect fees from their members and 'freely determine their obligations to each other,' but each would work 'to promote the dignity of its members, and perfection in the technique of the arts and crafts; to discipline labour by reference to models of eternal beauty,' and would 'create its own emblems, insignia, music, chants and prayers, institute rites and ceremonials, compete as lavishly as possible in the manifestations of public

festivity, of anniversary celebrations, games by land and by sea; and further, venerate its dead, honour its veterans, celebrate its heroes.' D'Annunzio did not remain in Fiume long enough to superintend the working of this first 'Corporative State,' but the whole of the interventionist press was with him in his adventure, and Nationalists, Mussolinians, interventionists generally—except certain Radicals and moderate Socialists who had taken Wilson's ideals seriously, and were ready to pay for them—applauded his choreography.

In Rome, ministries were formed and reformed which attempted to obtain the backing of the relics of the old majority, and of the Popular Party and the Socialists. The Socialists, however, were internally too much at variance either to support or (constructively) oppose any Government: the Popular Party, in lesser degree, spoke with a voice now favourable to great equalitarian (especially agrarian) reforms, now solicitous for the conservation of institutions. And the interventionists on their side, while in concert they violently opposed the legal Government in its efforts to evacuate d'Annunzio's legionaries from Fiume, had in common little that was more definite than withering contempt for the political classes they had combined to flout in 1915. The leading Italian Socialist, Vilfredo Pareto, gave some form to this contempt by accumulating proofs that the Italian *bourgeoisie* (and not only the Italian) were now decadently incapable of maintaining their prestige as the directing class of the nation.

But Mussolini, after some abortive manœuvres tending towards a return to Socialist alliances, showed himself ready to lead even if he little knew whither he might be leading. He took his allies where he found them, and led them to power by the methods which so many chroniclers have, with such varying degrees of approval, described. Each group of Mussolinian supporters brought a selection of their formulated doctrines (if any). His own close companions, who had passed from Socialism with him on the War issue and were now known as 'Fascists,' had been indoctrinated by Sorel. But being no longer listened to by the working classes, they could not make it their life's business to keep those working classes always in fighting trim. The Fascists carried with them, then, memories of a proletarian crusade that

was utterly obsolete. Now the Nationalists, never more than a small group of middle-class professionals, on good terms, however, with the heavy industry of north Italy, had assailed the Giolittian regime in the name not of such a proletarian 'myth,' but of a national 'myth.' They had spent their eloquence in spurring the Italian family of humans into the sharpest possible rivalry against the other European families. These two 'myths'—proletarian and nationalist—could not coexist as equals; for a workman who lived for loyalty to other workmen must often be ready to damage his Italian employer in competition with a foreign employer. The Nationalists had formulated a system, therefore, by which at all times workmen must subordinate their fellow-feeling for other workmen to the duty of rendering full service to their Italian employer. Strikes would thus be illegal. But the employer was to utilize this assured, regular, and cheap labour, not for an unreasonable personal enrichment; he would have to render account to some representative of the nation of his takings, and draw only a reasonable profit for himself. Thus the Nationalists had sketched out projects of regimentation of employees and employers, differing from Sorelian and Guild Socialist projects in that the employer, the property owner, far from being superseded by a producers' syndicate, remained to enjoy assured, though not unlimited rights. And who would set a limit on these rights? 'The Nation.' The Nationalists had never exactly known who 'The Nation' was. But Mussolini, who took over their doctrines, much as they stood, could easily give an answer—'The Nation' was himself and company.

Together with the Nationalists, certain self-styled Liberals accepted Mussolini as the national leader; and Giovanni Gentile brought his far from contemptible stock of judgments to the pool. He taught Mussolini's followers to utter contemptuous dismissals of the 'demo-social,' 'demo-masonic,' 'demo-liberal' doctrines of steady progress arising out of the individual's effort to better himself and out of the same individual's subjection of all traditions and institutions and instincts to rational scrutiny. No! said Gentile. The individual lives in a world that has been historically matured: to criticize the forms of human society by the light of individual reason is a presumptuous misunderstanding. Whatever



is must be, and the true human task is to embrace and interpret it. And thus the Mussolinian found it easy—even were he intimately irreligious or disrespectful—to bow indulgently to throne and altar. Yet while Gentile rejected the claim of reason to question and condemn the existent, he allowed to instinct—in his own words, to the Spirit as Pure Act—an unlimited and divine freedom—a freedom which his unsophisticated disciples might take as licensing much libertinism in methods of gaining and retaining power whether within the nation or in the wider field of competition between nations. In the joint resources of Gentile's pantheism, Corradini's nationalism, and d'Annunzio's sensuousness, Mussolini and his followers have at disposal a vocabulary rich enough for infinite variations on the ancient theme of paternal government, in a country where the father's office is understood to range from the enforcement of strict obedience to the most smilingly benign indulgence.

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## CHAPTER X

# POLITICAL THOUGHT IN AMERICA

### I. THE PURITAN COLONIES

THE people who during the first half of the seventeenth century emigrated to America were bent upon social as well as religious reform. Their object was to build up a new kind of society, free from the imperfections found in their contemporary England. They were acutely conscious of evils existing in England which were too deeply entrenched to be overthrown by direct attack. The only way out seemed to be emigration to foreign countries, and especially to America, where they could plant colonies of their own.

That the early settlers in New England were perfectly conscious of the task of building up an ideal society appears from the text of the *Mayflower Compact* (1620), that famous document drawn up in sight of land by emigrants bound for America: 'In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James . . . having undertaken, for the glorie of God, and advancemente of the Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant the first colonie in the Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutuallly in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for the generall good of the Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

The outlines of the organization of the new commonwealth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. William MacDonald, *Documentary Source Book of American History*, New York 1923, p. 19.

were based upon the religious conceptions of the colonists. The founders of New England were Puritans; they considered themselves as 'God's elect,' and they were determined to frame a social system in which all authority was to belong to the 'elect.'

The nucleus of the new society was to be the Puritan congregation. For all the colonists settling in New England after 1620 it was an essential point that bishops and prelates could wield no authority on the new continent. The congregation was to be free from any form of interference from above, and it was to regulate its own affairs in keeping with Puritan principles, for which no recognition could be obtained in the Church of England.

According to the Puritan conception, however, not only religious but also political authority was to be vested exclusively in the Puritan congregation. For the Puritans, there was no sharp dividing line between religious and political matters; they meant all public life to be organized within the congregation, which they intended to be a political as well as religious unit. They held that political and social life was to be based on the divine law.

Thus the New England colonists looked to the Scriptures for the fundamental principles upon which their ideal society was to be founded. As John Eliot wrote: 'There is undoubtedly a form of civil government, instituted by God Himself in the holy Scriptures, whereby any Nation may enjoy all the ends and effects of Government in the best manner. . . . We should derogate from the Sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures, if we should deny it.'<sup>1</sup> One of the questions put before the New Haven colony upon its establishment was: 'Whether the Scriptures doe holde forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in duties which they are to perform to God and men as well in the government of families and in the Commonwealth as in the matters of Church.'<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay colony, the general court requested the Rev. John Cotton to draw up an abstract of the laws of Moses, to be used as the fundamental laws

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles Edward Merriam, *A History of American Political Theories*, New York 1903, 2nd ed. 1926, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

of the colony. The first abstract submitted by Cotton was rejected; a revised version, believed to be the joint work of the Rev. John Cotton and Sir Henry Vane, however, was adopted. To Puritans, Mosaic law was of universal validity; as Cotton put it, there was no 'capital law of Moses, but is of moral (that is of general and perpetual) equity, in all Nations, in all Ages. *Capitalia Mosis politica sunt aeterna.*'<sup>1</sup>

For the Puritans, of course, there was no question of literally applying all laws of Moses in their new Commonwealth. They rather developed a technique of interpretation and justification by which a line of conduct which they considered to be right could be proved to follow from certain specific laws of Moses. In proving that a certain given measure was lawful, bold analogy rather than strict logic was applied. When Ann Hutchison was tried in court in Boston (1637) for her being connected with the unorthodox sect of the Antinomians, she desired to be told the breach of what biblical law was laid to her charge; the governor's reply was: 'Why, dishonouring of parents.'<sup>2</sup> Later, in 1661, when a Quaker was tried in Boston, the prosecution qualified his guilt as being 'the Sin of Witchcraft.'<sup>3</sup> The purpose of these interpretations referring to various biblical laws (Lev. xx. 9; Deut. xxi. 18-21; Lev. xx. 6) was to construe the acts with which the accused were charged as capital offences.

Biblical law was also applied to problems of administrative technique with surprising ingenuity. John Winthrop, one of the outstanding figures of early Massachusetts, relates in his *History of New England* how once a deadlock arose in the assembly over the question whether the assistants (Government officials) had a veto over the voice of the elected deputies. As no agreement could be reached, the session was adjourned, a fast declared, and, meeting again, the court listened to a sermon by Mr John Cotton, who took his text from Haggai ii. 4: 'Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Bushnell Hart, *American History told by Contemporaries*, New York 1902, vol. i, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 481. For the legal construction. cf. 1 Sam. xv. 23.

of hosts.' What else could this text mean but that, under biblical law, the magistrates, the people's deputies, and Church ministers equally had a negative voice over each other's decisions? Thus a typically English and American system of 'checks and balances' could easily be deduced from the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

The Puritans intended their regime to be a theocracy. 'Theocratic, or to make the Lord God our Governour, is the best form of Government in a Christian Common-wealth and which men that are free to chuse (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish,' the Rev John Davenport, a New Haven minister, wrote in 1638.<sup>2</sup> Just because America was a new country, established by people who were 'free to chuse' and unimpeded by the accumulated wrongdoings of the past, she was to be 'God's own country.' This conception has been a permanent inspiration to American political thought. As late as in 1837, Noyes nominated Jesus Christ as President of the United States.

For the Puritans, there was no sharp dividing line between religious and civil law. They were apt to view disobedience or opposition to the established Government as a breach of God's commands, and religious shortcomings as offences under civil law. Commenting on a movement among the people in Massachusetts in favour of repealing certain ordinances which some thought were oppressive, John Winthrop wrote: '... when the people have chosen men to be their rulers, and to make their laws, and bound themselves by oath to submit thereto, now to combine together (a lesser part of them) in a public petition to have any order repealed, which is not repugnant to the law of God, savours of resisting an ordinance of God. . . .'<sup>3</sup>

The view that offences against the true religion are punishable by the authorities as crimes under common law followed from the Puritan doctrine that it was the State's duty to protect the true religion. This implied that the State was under an obligation to stamp out unorthodox creeds. According to Nathaniel Ward, author of *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam in America* (1644), mere indifference may be tolerated, but in the face of false teachings tolerance must end. 'To tolerate more than indifferents,' he says, 'is not to deale indifferently with God. He that doth it,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 380.

takes his Scepter out of his hand, and bids him stand by.' Referring to 'Persecution of True Religion, and Toleration of false,' he says that 'the last is farre the worst,' and remarks: 'Augustines tongue had not owed his mouth one pennyrent though he had never spake word more in it, but this, *Nullum malum pejus libertate errandi*.'<sup>1</sup>

In the strongholds of conservative Puritanism, such as Massachusetts, deviations from the 'true religion' of the Puritan *élite* were punished as public offences. The penalty for heresy was often death (especially in the case of Quakers), but whipping, fines, and exile also were administered.

Colonists whose religious views differed from those of the Puritan *élite* in Boston protested against the intervention of State authorities in religious controversies. Thus Roger Williams, the Salem minister who was exiled because of his religious doctrine, and became the founder of Rhode Island, undertook to prove that the correction of religious offences could be no concern of the State. In his book, entitled *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), he argued that the civil Government could punish only offences against the 'second table' of the Law, that is to say, offences whereby some material damage was caused to one's fellow-men, whereas breaches of the 'first table,' dealing exclusively with man's duties toward God, could be punished by God alone. Accordingly, Rogers urged complete separation of temporal and spiritual power. He maintained that Church and State are separate bodies; that States can exist without the true religion; and that, by granting the civil Government the right to impose by coercion the religion which it deems to be the true one, we should allow heathen Governments to suppress Christianity.

The foremost theorist of Massachusetts orthodoxy, John Cotton, vehemently protested against this doctrine. 'It is,' he said,<sup>2</sup> 'a carnal and worldly, and, indeed, an ungodly imagination, to confine the magistrate's charge to the bodies and goods of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 393 f.

<sup>2</sup> In a book written as a reply to Williams's *Bloudy Tenent* under the title, *The Bloudy Tenent washed, and made white in the Blood of the Lamb*, 1647, Chap. XXXIII. Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 10. Williams continued the controversy in *The Bloudy Tenent yet more Bloudy*, 1652.

subjects, and to exclude them from the care of their soules.' 'Whatsoever concerneth the good of the city and the propulsing of the contrary,' according to him, was a matter of civil law; 'now religion is the best good of the city, and therefore laws about religion are truly called civil lawes.'<sup>1</sup>

The Puritan congregation was by no means intended to include all inhabitants of a township. On the contrary, admission of all to Church membership and to the sacraments was one of the features in Catholicism, in the Church of England, and in Presbyterianism, to which the Puritans most vehemently objected. According to them, it was the highest and most sacred duty of every Christian to keep the Church free from impure and objectionable elements. Only those could be admitted to Church membership whose conduct, and personal circumstances, offered sufficient guarantee that they belonged to the 'elect.' The members of a congregation were to exercise constant supervision over each other so as to ensure that no unworthy person might be tolerated among them. This was considered to be of paramount importance, inasmuch as the presence of one sinner could compromise the spiritual integrity of the whole community. Each individual member was responsible for the whole congregation.

Now the basic idea upon which the Puritan political system was founded was that Church members alone could have political rights. This ensured that the Puritan commonwealth could be nothing but an oligarchy. As wealth was one of the criteria (though by no means the only one) on the basis of which it was determined whether one belonged to the 'elect,' the commonwealth was necessarily controlled by the wealthy. Puritan rule was the rule of an economic and religious *élite*. This explains why typical Puritans in America, such as Winthrop and Cotton, denounced democracy. Winthrop declared that democracy was 'the meanest and worst of all forms of government,' inasmuch as there was 'no such government in Israel,'<sup>2</sup> and he objected to 'referring matter of counsel or judicature to the body of the people, *quia* the best part is always the least, and of that best part

<sup>1</sup> Merriam, *ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. James Truslow Adams, *The Founding of New England*, Boston 1921, p. 143.

the wiser part is always the lesser.<sup>1</sup> Since the 'elect,' the 'saints,' were necessarily a minority, it was obvious to Puritans that political rights could be exercised only by a minority.

Under Puritan rule, only about one-fifth of the male adult population exercised political rights.<sup>2</sup> Among the minority which made up the 'political nation,' however, a democratic system prevailed. Public officers were elected by the people, and laws were made by an elected body in co-operation with the magistrates. In the Puritan colonies, all local governmental authority was considered as emanating from 'the people,' that is to say, from the enfranchised members of the congregation.

✓ According to the Puritan conception, a congregation came into being through a 'covenant' among equal members. Since, however, the congregation was considered to be the basic unit of civil society, it followed that the 'covenant' among Church members was the origin of all properly organized social life.

The founders of colonies often drew up 'covenants' or 'compacts' before leaving the home country; the *Mayflower Covenant*, quoted above (p. 367), may serve as an example.

For the Puritans, whose main concern was the preservation of the independence of their congregations, the doctrine of 'social contract' was necessarily attractive. We may briefly recall that this doctrine, as formulated by various writers in the sixteenth century, held that all men were originally completely free and equal, and that all authority found in society was derived from the free consent of the members of society. In New England, the 'social contract' theory was put forth by such writers as Thomas Hooker and others.<sup>3</sup>

The Puritan tradition of political thought, however, did not consist only of doctrines of the 'social contract' type. One of the supreme authorities for Puritans was Calvin, whose political ideas were very different from the contract theory. ✓ For Calvin, the source of political authority was not 'social contract' but God's will. According to him, 'it is impossible to resist the

<sup>1</sup> *History of New England*, vol. ii, p. 428, quoted in Albert B. Hart, *National Ideals Historically Traced*, New York and London 1907, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. James Truslow Adams, *ibid.* p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Raymond G. Gettell, *History of American Political Thought*, New York and London 1928, p. 70.



magistrate without, at the same time, resisting God.<sup>1</sup> For the theorists of the social contract, the origin of government is human and natural; for Calvin, it is divine. The Puritans have always retained the Calvinistic point of view. Much as they insisted on the covenant as the source of social organization, they never understood the covenant as a purely secular instrument. The covenant was made before God, and its meaning was not to reserve all rights of sovereignty for the partners. In early colonial thought, the divine character of government was widely recognized. Thus, William Penn, in the preface of his *Frame of Government of Pennsylvania* (1682), quotes St Paul to the effect that government is necessary because of the fallen state of man, and continues: 'This settles the divine right of government beyond exception . . . Government seems to me a part of religion itself, a thing sacred in its institution and end.'<sup>2</sup> For a long time, the Puritan colonies recognized the king's authority without reserve. In the controversies which developed over questions of trade regulation and taxation, however, they more and more leaned towards the radical 'social contract' theory, which, contrary to Calvin, asserted the right of the subjects to resist sovereigns failing in their duties.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, iii; cf. Hart, *Contemporaries*, vol. i, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. P. Poore, *The Federal and State Constitutions, etc.*, Washington 1877, p. 1518 f.

<sup>3</sup> With regard to the right of resistance, however, there is no clear-cut division between the 'social contract' school and the Calvinistic doctrine. It is true that Calvin in general rejects the right of resistance: 'If we direct our attention to the word of God,' he says, 'it will carry us . . . even to submit to the government, not only of those princes who discharge their duty to us with becoming integrity and fidelity, but of all who possess the sovereignty, even though they perform none of the duties of their function' (cf. Hart, *ibid.* p. 329). On the other hand, such theorists of the social contract as Locke supplied legal arguments in favour of the right of resistance: ' . . . whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command, to compass that upon the subject, which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate; and, acting without authority, may be opposed, as any other man, who by force invades the right of another' (*Two Treatises of Government*, London 1690, bk. ii, Chap. XVIII, § 202). However, Calvin in one case authorizes resistance, in declaring that: 'In the obedience which we have shown to be due to the authority of governors, it is always necessary to make one exception, and that is entitled to our first attention, that it do not seduce us from obedience to him, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty all

The Puritan political system, of course, could exist only in places where certain specific conditions were realized. In the main, it was confined to the coastal towns of New England. Congregations of the Puritan type could be built up only in towns. In colonies such as Virginia or Carolina, the economic life of which was determined by big plantations of a 'feudal' type, no Puritan type of society could develop. Since extensive agricultural production was barred to the Puritans because of their religious and social outlook, their economic activities were confined to handicrafts, small farming, and, especially, maritime trade.<sup>1</sup> Capitalism first developed in the east in connection with the export trade, and profoundly influenced the political thinking of that region.

Even in New England, however, the Puritan type of administration could be maintained only for a limited period. It was becoming more and more difficult for the Puritan *élite* to maintain its ascendancy, inasmuch as it was comparatively easy for dissenters to remove to places where the Puritans wielded no authority. The members of sects such as the Quakers, whom the Puritans persecuted fiercely, found a refuge in Pennsylvania. The pioneers of the western inland region were recruited mostly from poor (Scotch, Irish, or German) immigrants who had a religious and political mentality of their own. Contrasting with the extremely 'urban' type of the Puritan mentality, the Anabaptists, who came over from Germany and the Low Countries, repudiated intellectualism and, from religious motives, approved only of a mode of life which was especially adapted to the conditions of pioneer existence.

Later on, when religious motives receded to the background, there persisted among the pioneers of the west a mentality opposed

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their sceptres ought to submit' (cf. Hart, *ibid.* p. 330). Such a theorist of the social contract as Hobbes, on the other hand, rejects the right of resistance in all cases. He declares that 'there can happen no breach of Covenant on the part of the Sovereigne; and consequently none of his subjects, by any pretence of forfeiture, can be freed from his subjection' (*Leviathan*, xviii). Thus, the Calvinist doctrine, in its secularized form, could very well lead to revolutionary consequences, while the social contract theory, in the form given it by Hobbes, could be used to justify either the absolute monarchy or the totalitarian State.

<sup>1</sup> For the importance of the fish trade, see Adams, *ibid.* p. 11.

to the eastern *bourgeoisie*. The pioneers, an indebted class, were interested in easy credit facilities, debt reduction, and 'soft money.' This pioneer attitude has been one of the characteristic elements of American political life as long as there was free soil—and even after. Even in our own day there are periodical movements in favour of 'soft money,' inflationary credits, and subsidies of all kinds flaring up.

Social mobility, the intensification of commercial and industrial activities, and the rise of a 'proletariat' in the towns and the frontier region, gradually undermined the Puritan system. One of the stalwarts of conservative Puritanism, Dr Increase Mather of Boston, wrote in 1722: 'I that have known what New-England was from the Beginning, cannot be but troubled to see the Degeneracy of this Place.'<sup>1</sup> The importance of religion in public life slowly declined; new issues, mostly political, came to the fore. The historical importance of Puritanism, however, was considerable. It was a religious and political system fitted exclusively for a society of the *bourgeois* type. Wherever Puritanism was adopted, all feudal elements were necessarily eliminated from social and political life. As a protest against the feudal type of the organization of Church and society, Puritanism anticipated the great revolution of the eighteenth century. It has largely contributed to making North America a continent without feudalism.

## 2. REVOLUTION AND CONSTITUTION

American political thinking during the revolutionary period was dominated by the ideas of natural and constitutional rights, of the social contract, and the right of resistance.

The dominant political issue of the period was that of Britain's authority over the colonies. Conflicts increasing in bitterness and violence arose over questions of taxation and trade regulation. The situation became especially tense after the Seven Years War. The Crown argued that the colonies, which had profited by the military protection of the empire, ought to contribute more

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hart, *Contemporaries*, vol. ii, p. 262.

towards the upkeep of the military machine. New schemes of taxation were evolved. The people in the colonies felt that this was an encroachment upon their ancient privileges and a threat to their economic existence.

There were divergences of interests between the various groups of colonies, and between different social classes. Thus, New England was interested in keeping out competition by other nations (or, for that matter, by Britain) in the shipping trade; the southern colonies, on the other hand, fared better if they had not to deal with a monopoly in shipping their produce.<sup>1</sup> The British taxation and tariff schemes, however, affected the interests of all, and resistance to them was universally endorsed.

Taxation by the British Parliament was rejected on the ground that it was incompatible with the constitutional rights of the colonists. According to the constitutional theory current in the colonies, the latter owed allegiance to the king, but not to Parliament; as John Adams put it: 'The Fealty and allegiance of Americans is undoubtedly due to the person of King George III, whom God long preserve and prosper.'<sup>2</sup> The Stamp Act Congress in 1765 laid down the constitutional rights of colonists as follows: 'That his Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies, are intitled to all the inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects, within the kingdom of Great-Britain. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no Taxes be imposed on them but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives. That the people of these colonies are not, and, from their local circumstances, cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great-Britain. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies are persons chosen therein by themselves, and that no taxes ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures.'<sup>3</sup> Later resolutions and remonstrances, such as the Circular Letter which the General Court of Massachusetts addressed to the other

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hamilton's speech in the New York Assembly, in Hart, *ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 242 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. iv, p. 146; cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 83 f., where further references are given.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 137 f.

colonies in 1768<sup>1</sup> or the declarations of the First Continental Congress (1774)<sup>2</sup> reiterated these principles. It is open to doubt whether the colonists' constitutional theory holds water, inasmuch as the principle of 'no taxation without representation' was by no means universally recognized in Britain at the time;<sup>3</sup> the colonists, however, considered it as impregnable, since, for them, it was based upon inalienable 'natural rights.' As the Stamp Act Congress put it: 'All supplies to the crown being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution, for the people of Great-Britain to grant to his Majesty the property of the colonists.'<sup>4</sup> In the eyes of the colonists, the principles of the British Constitution were identical with the code of natural rights, guaranteeing to every one his life, liberty, and property. As Samuel Adams said: 'The rights of Nature are happily interwoven in the British Constitution. It is its glory that it is copied from Nature.'<sup>5</sup>

As the conflict progressed, 'natural rights' came to be stressed more than the 'rights of Englishmen.' As it became apparent that the British Crown was unwilling to admit the colonists' constitutional theory, the latter more and more stressed their right of resistance, as it was proclaimed by Locke. Finally, allegiance to the king was abandoned even in theory. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) marks the turning-point. His argument is not that of a loyal subject defending his constitutional rights, but that of a republican. For him a king is either a tyrant or an unnecessary figurehead. Paine had no veneration for the British Constitution.<sup>6</sup> For the colonies he advocated unconditional separation from Britain. 'Independence,' he said, 'is the only BOND that can tie and keep us together.'<sup>7</sup> In the Declaration of Independence (1776) there is a constant appeal to 'the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God.'<sup>8</sup> In it the theory of natural rights has found its final expression.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 146 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 162 f.

<sup>3</sup> For the discussion of this point, see Gettell, *ibid.* p. 86 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> *Writings*, vol. i, p. 47, quoted by Gettell, *ibid.* p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 93 f. <sup>7</sup> Cf. Hart, *Contemporaries*, vol. ii, p. 533.

<sup>8</sup> The most famous paragraph may be quoted here: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life,

During the period following the Declaration of Independence, political thought was mostly concerned with popular sovereignty and with necessary safeguards against the renewal of 'tyranny.' In the various states Bills of Rights were drafted and constitutions adopted in which the main stress was laid upon preventing encroachments on the part of the executive. The 'will of the people' was recognized as the sole source of legal power, and the legislature, in which the will of the people found its expression, was given supremacy over the other branches of government. Thus, the governor was not only elected by the legislature in most of the states, but his appointing power was limited, his term of office was short, and his right of veto was recognized only in a few states.<sup>1</sup>

✓ The new State constitutions were based upon the theory of social contract, and they stressed the voluntary character of political associations. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 declared: 'The body-politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals; it is a social compact by which the whole people covenants with each citizen and each citizen with the whole people that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good.'<sup>2</sup>

One of the outstanding exponents of the social contract theory was Thomas Jefferson. He held that laws and constitutions had binding force only for those who had expressly signified their consent to be subject to them, and he denied that any generation had the right to assume such obligations for its successors. Consequently, he held that all fundamental laws must be submitted to the people in every new generation. Taking Buffon's calculations as a basis, according to which half of all men over twenty-one years of age will be dead after eighteen years and eight months, he urged that all laws, constitutions, and contracts be renewed every nineteen years.<sup>3</sup>

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Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.' Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 191.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Poore, *ibid.* p. 956 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 151 f.

Jefferson was opposed to a strong central executive. Shays's rebellion (1786), which frightened the upper classes, failed to convert him to a more conservative attitude: 'God forbid,' he said, 'that we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.'<sup>1</sup>

Despite the uncompromisingly equalitarian tone of his doctrine, Jefferson cannot be regarded as an exponent of democracy in the modern sense. His 'liberty' was that of the land-owning classes, who were anxious to prevent the establishment of a strong central bureaucracy. 'The less government the better,' was the motto of landed gentlemen, who were sure they could always manage their affairs without calling on the Government, while the capitalistic interests in the eastern towns required help from the administration. The landed interests fought under the banner of the 'people's rights.' It should be remembered, however, that the 'political nation' of the period included only the property-owning minority. Throughout the Union, property qualifications were required for the suffrage as well as for holding office.<sup>2</sup> In New York, in a population of about 30,000, according to the census of 1790, there were only 1,209 freemen valued at \$100 or more, 1,221 valued at \$20, and 2,661 '40s. freeholders.'<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, when the exponents of Jeffersonian democracy spoke on behalf of 'the people,' they did not realize that, under their system, only a minority had political rights. 'Here,' Jefferson said once, 'every one owns property or is at least so well

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> A few examples: Under the New Hampshire Constitution of 1784, suffrage was extended to all taxpayers; only freeholders owning at least \$100 could be elected to the Lower House, and those owning \$200 could be senators. In Massachusetts, the right of vote could be exercised only by freeholders having an annual income of at least \$3, or possessing an estate of the value of \$60. Senators were required to have an estate of \$600, or freehold of \$300. In Connecticut, the freeholders' qualifications required an annual income of 40s. or \$40 personal estate. In Virginia, the suffrage was given to those owning twenty-five acres of improved or fifty acres of unimproved land, as well as to certain artisans in Norfolk and Williamsburg. Cf. Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, New York 1913, 2nd ed. 1934, pp. 65-70.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Beard, *ibid.* p. 67.

situated as to be interested in the maintenance of law and order.' <sup>1</sup> Speaking in the Convention, John Dickinson denied that the limitation of the suffrage to freeholders meant a 'step towards aristocracy,' explaining that 'it will not be unpopular—because the Freeholders are the most numerous at this time.' <sup>2</sup>

✓ Liberty, for Jefferson, had a distinctly agrarian character. He held that the democratic form of government could function in America only as long as the Americans remained an agricultural people; 'when they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe.' <sup>3</sup>

This agrarian conception of liberty dominated political life after the Revolution. ✓ Capitalistic interests in the east, however, imperiously demanded the creation of a strong federal power. The following epoch was characterized by the struggle between agrarian democracy and capitalistic federalism. Charles A. Beard, in his book already quoted, has shown how capitalistic interests became strong enough to rally a solid majority to the cause of a Federal Constitution.

During the war public indebtedness rose to an extraordinary extent, as the war was largely financed by the issuance of paper money and by land certificates. The depreciation of paper money intensified the conflict between creditor and debtor groups. Eastern capitalists, as the biggest creditors, demanded that currency should be put on a normal basis. Shipping interests advocated trade regulation, the manufacturers demanded tariffs. Moreover, the holders of land certificates were vitally interested in the rise in value of the lands conquered in the west. All this could be achieved, however, only by a strong Federal Government.

The question before the Constitutional Convention was, then, whether the states could continue to form a loose confederation among independent units, or place a federal authority above the local powers. Agrarian interests, on the whole, favoured local self-government, since, in local administration, the landed groups could easily maintain their supremacy. Support of a Federal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 166. It may be noted, however, that later, in 1824, Jefferson himself admitted that, in Virginia, the majority of freemen were excluded from franchise, and that many were not even freemen; *ibid.* p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> According to Rufus King's notes, quoted by Beard, *ibid.* p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, vol. iv, p. 419, quoted in Merriam, *ibid.* p. 166.



Constitution, however, was by no means confined to the spokesmen of capitalistic interests. Beard mentions<sup>1</sup> the 'Cincinnati,' that is to say, the demobilized officers of the revolutionary army, who held land certificates and consequently were interested in the establishment of a strong federal authority. Strong agricultural groups, such as many plantation owners in the south, also favoured the Constitution,<sup>2</sup> because they held land certificates and relied upon a strong federal executive in suppressing slave uprisings. Other landowners, such as the indebted farmers in the west and the holders of big estates in the Hudson valley,<sup>3</sup> remained hostile to the Constitution—the former because they feared the consequences of a new, orthodox currency policy, the latter because they anticipated land taxation as the consequence of the creation of a strong federal power. Finally, the supporters of the Constitution and of a federal Government prevailed, but the agrarian element was strong enough to secure a fair degree of self-government for the states. Thus, the Constitution as it was adopted in 1787 was a compromise. There was, however, a striking contrast between this Federal Constitution and the state constitutions adopted during the preceding decade.

The supremacy of the legislatures, which had characterized the earlier state constitutions, was abandoned. Instead of it an ingenious system of 'checks and balances' was adopted, opposing to each other the various branches of government. The President was to be independent of the legislature, and the judiciary independent of both the legislature and the executive. Provision was made for a federal taxation and tariff policy, a point which was essential from the viewpoint of capitalistic interests. The states, on the other hand, retained a character of semi-sovereignty, so that no sharp line of demarcation was drawn between state and federal authority—a fact which subsequently led to conflicts of extreme gravity.

The epoch of constitution-making was characterized by growing awareness of the potential weaknesses and disadvantages of democracy. Whereas, in the revolutionary era, it was almost sacrilege to doubt the truth of the motto, 'The people can do no wrong,' political thinkers of the following decade were full of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 38 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 29 f.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 28 f.

apprehension at the possible tyranny and abuse of power by the people. This mood found its most forceful expression in the works of John Adams: *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States* (1787-8) and *Discourses on Davila* (1790). 'We may,' he said, 'appeal to every page of history . . . for proofs irrefragable, that the people, when they have been unchecked, have been as unjust, tyrannical, brutal, barbarous, and cruel as any king or senate possessed by an uncontrollable power. The majority has eternally and without one exception usurped over the rights of the minority.'<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Jefferson in 1815: 'The fundamental principle of my political creed is that despotism, or unlimited sovereignty, or absolute power, is the same in a majority of a popular assembly, an aristocratical council, an oligarchical junto, and a single emperor.'<sup>2</sup> He bitterly commented upon democratic 'delusions': 'All projects of government, formed upon a supposition of continual vigilance, sagacity, virtue, and firmness of the people, when possessed of the exercise of supreme power, are cheats and delusions.'<sup>3</sup>

Mistrust of excessive democracy was expressed, and a 'mixed' form of government advocated, in a series of papers published under the title *The Federalist* by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay after the Convention, while the question of ratifying the Constitution was being discussed by the states. *The Federalist* exercised considerable influence, and largely contributed towards winning public opinion for the Constitution.

In No. 10 of *The Federalist*, Madison discussed the possibility that a majority in Congress might seek to make its democratic power prevail against the property rights of the minority. He said: 'To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction and at the same time preserve the spirit and the form of popular government is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed.'<sup>4</sup>

As a means of safeguarding private interests against the encroachments of the majority, separation of powers was recommended. Its doctrine was that the power of the various

<sup>1</sup> *Defence*, vol. vi., p. 10, quoted in Merriam, *ibid.* p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, vol. x, p. 174, quoted in Merriam, *ibid.* p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Defence*, vol. vi, p. 166; *ibid.* p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Beard, *ibid.* p. 157 f.

branches of government ought to be evenly balanced, special precautions being taken against the excessive influence of the legislature. This, according to *The Federalist*, was the greatest danger menacing republican government.

✓ *The Federalist* is an eminently realistic document. It repeats the traditional doctrines of social contract and popular sovereignty, but it stresses the economic factors controlling the State. Political representation, it holds, ought to be divided between three classes, the merchants, landowners, and learned professions. The equilibrium best suited to promote general prosperity would arise from the mutual opposition of these classes, it was argued, while the inclusion of other classes was considered as dangerous.<sup>1</sup>

*The Federalist* attached little importance to formal guarantees of personal rights. It defended the omission of a Bill of Rights from the Constitution. No. 84 declared: 'The people surrender nothing, and as they retain everything, they have no need of particular reservations';<sup>2</sup> and No. 28: 'The true guaranty of liberty in a republican Government lies in the fact that the political power belongs to the representatives chosen by the people themselves.'<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Hamilton, one of the foremost advocates of the federalist system, was a statesman of a curiously 'modern' turn of mind. He believed in efficiency, in centralized bureaucratic government, and in orthodox capitalistic technique. He had no veneration for the tradition of State particularism. He once proposed the division of states into small districts, so as to increase the power of the federal courts, and recommended a constitutional amendment whereby Congress would have the power to divide large states into smaller ones.<sup>4</sup> Rational interest was the only standard whereby he judged problems of foreign and domestic policy. Prosperity, and especially that of trade and shipping, was for him the chief aim of government. He favoured protective tariffs, a centralized fiscal policy, and the funding of national debt.

Hamilton's ideas were those of the industrial and capitalistic east. Against him were aligned the forces of the west and south:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 111 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 156 f.

agrarian conservatism and agrarian radicalism. The agrarian interests soon entrenched themselves behind the states' rights as against capitalistic federalism.

During the federalist administration of John Adams, in 1798 and 1799, the legislatures of Kentucky and Virginia adopted resolutions wherein the theory of states' rights as against federal supremacy was forcefully stated. The resolutions were inspired by Jefferson and Madison respectively, that is to say, by the leaders of the 'Republican' or 'Republican Democratic' Party, which in the election of 1800 triumphed over the Federalists and subsequently controlled American political life for thirty years.

The Kentucky and Virginia resolutions were drafted as protests against the Alien and Sedition Acts, deemed to interfere with personal liberty and the freedom of the press; but they also stated a constitutional theory holding that the various states had the right to declare as void, to 'nullify,' federal laws passed in disregard of the limits which the Constitution set to the legislative power of Congress.

The Kentucky resolutions stated 'that to take from the states all the powers of self-government, and transfer them to a general and consolidated Government, without regard to the special delegations and reservations solemnly agreed to in that compact, is not for the peace, happiness, or prosperity of these states: And that, therefore, this Commonwealth is determined, as it doubts not its co-States are, tamely to submit to undelegated and consequently unlimited powers in no man or body of men on earth,'<sup>1</sup> and concluded that the states 'will concur in declaring these acts void and of no force.'<sup>2</sup> The Virginia resolutions stated the theory of nullification in the following terms: 'That, in case of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of other powers not granted by the said compact [*sc.* the Constitution], the States, who are parties thereto, have the right and are in duty bound to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil, and for maintaining within their respective limits the authorities, rights, and liberties appertaining to them.'<sup>3</sup>

The eastern states, to which these resolutions were communicated, replied unfavourably; but the issue of nullification

<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 275.

was by no means dead. It rose to primary importance in the discussion on slavery preceding the Civil War.

In the agrarian section, the Republicans' victory was received with great enthusiasm. 'Now the revolution of 1776 is complete,' wrote the *Aurora*.<sup>1</sup> Writing to Jefferson, his friend, Charles Pinckney, discussed the attitude of the southern states, and referred to 'Southern republican interest' as 'the rock of their *earthly* salvation.'<sup>2</sup> It remained so even after the Democratic Party succeeded to the old Republican Democratic Party. Under the auspices of the agrarian south and west, political rights were extended to an unprecedented degree, and government became more 'popular' than ever before; at the same time, however, 'Southern republican interest' became more and more identified with the cause of slavery, the most fateful issue in the history of the Union.

### 3. DEMOCRACY AND SLAVERY

In his inaugural address (1801), Jefferson formulated his political principles as follows: 'Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious and political: peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none: the support of the state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns, and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies: the preservation of the general government in its whole constitutional vigour, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home, and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people, a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped by the sword of revolution, when peaceable remedies are unprovided: absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism: a well-disciplined militia, our best reliance in peace, and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them: the supremacy of the civil over the military authority: economy in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Hart, *Contemporaries*, vol. iii, p. 336.

public expense that labour may be lightly burthened: the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith: encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid: the diffusion of information, and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of public reason: freedom of religion; freedom of the press; and freedom of person, under the protection of the Habeas Corpus: and trial by juries impartially selected.’<sup>1</sup> The various points of this programme show that Jefferson, while stressing states’ rights and the general principles of ‘republicanism,’ also insisted on a strong central government and a sound currency policy. The Republicans’ governmental practice did not very much differ from that of the Federalists. They adopted a highly protectionist tariff in 1812, and Madison’s tariff of 1816, based upon a community of interests between northern manufacturers and southern landowners, marked an increase even over the war tariff of 1812.<sup>2</sup> Calhoun charged Jefferson with doing ‘nothing towards maintaining the rights of the states, as parties to the constitutional compact,’<sup>3</sup> and Madison, writing in 1823, admitted that ‘under a great change of foreign circumstances, and with a doubled population and more than doubled resources, the Republican party has been reconciled to certain measures and arrangements, which may be as proper now as they were premature and suspicious when urged by the champions of Federalism.’<sup>4</sup>

The social basis of the Republican administration was the landed

<sup>1</sup> Hart, *ibid.* p. 346 f.

<sup>2</sup> One of the stalwarts of agrarian states’ rights republicanism, John Randolph, denounced this tariff as follows: ‘My honourable colleague . . . has said, that the case of the manufacturers is not fairly before the House. True! It is not fairly before the House. It never can be fairly before the House; whenever it comes before us, it must come unfairly, not as a “spirit of health—but a goblin damned”—not “bringing with it airs from Heaven, but blasts from Hell”—it ought to be exorcised out of the House: for, what do the principles about which such a contest is maintained amount to, but a system of bounties to manufacturers . . . Government devising plans, and bestowing premiums out of the pockets of the hard-working cultivator of the soil. . . . I am convinced that it would be impolitic, as well as unjust, to aggravate the burdens of the people, for the purpose of favouring the manufacturers. . . . The agriculturists bear the whole brunt of war and taxation, while the others run in the ring of pleasure, and fatten upon them . . .’ (Cf. Hart, *ibid.* p. 434 f.)

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

gentry. Suffrage was still subject to property qualifications. As C. A. Beard remarks: 'Jeffersonian Democracy did not imply any abandonment of the property, and particularly the landed, qualifications on the suffrage or office-holding; it did not involve any fundamental alterations in the National Constitution which the Federalists had designed as a foil to the levelling propensities of the masses; it did not propose any new devices for a more immediate and direct control of the voters over the instrumentalities of government.'<sup>1</sup> When early in the nineteenth century the movement for universal suffrage set in, the leaders of Jeffersonian republicanism united with Federalists in rejecting it.

The opponents of 'manhood suffrage' argued that the masses of the proletariat, once in possession of political power, would play havoc with property rights. As Chancellor Kent of New York wrote: 'Universal suffrage jeopardizes property and puts it into the power of the poor and the profligate to control the affluent. Shall every department of government be at the disposal of those who are ignorant of the importance and nature of the right they are authorized to assume?'<sup>2</sup> When the universal suffrage, eventually, was introduced, it did operate a profound change in the political life of the Union; but this change did not consist in the abolition of property rights. For the small farmers who, under the new order of things, acquired a decisive voice, were themselves interested in the maintenance of private property. Their influence was felt in quite another direction: it brought about a new policy of public credit, based on the demands of small farmers, and increased the power of the executive, to the detriment of the legislature and judiciary.

The new epoch was ushered in by Jackson's election as President in 1828. The new President was a representative of the 'backwoods' pioneer farmers of the west. All presidents before him had been members of the 'aristocratic' classes; they came from the old landowning families of Virginia, or from New England patrician stock. Andrew Jackson, however, emphasized his being a 'man of the people,' in contrast to

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*, 1915, p. 467, quoted in Gettell, l. p. 190.

Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 241.

Congress, still controlled by 'aristocratic' and financial interests. When the Senate, in 1834, passed a motion of censure against him, Jackson vigorously protested. 'It is,' he said in his message on the censure vote, 'due to the high trust with which I have been charged, to those who may be called to succeed me in it, to the representatives of the people whose constitutional prerogative has been unlawfully assumed, to the people and to the states, and to the Constitution they have established, that I should not permit its provisions to be broken down by such an attack on the executive department without at least some effort "to preserve, protect, and defend" them.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the positions were reversed in comparison to the epoch of federalist control. The Federalists sought to strengthen the executive power as a check upon the Radical tendencies embodied in the legislature. About 1830, however, Congress was considered as the bulwark of commercial and financial interests, threatened by the radical course of the executive. Accordingly, the Conservatives' battle-cry was the defence of personal liberty against absolute, personal power. Henry Clay, the leader of the anti-Jackson opposition, warned lest the new regime might attempt to turn the Government into 'elective monarchy.'<sup>2</sup> This issue led to the revival of the two-party system. The Federalists had completely disappeared from the scene, largely because the resolutions adopted by their convention in Hartford in 1816 were tainted with New England separatism. Afterwards, the Republican (or Republican Democratic) Party for a while alone survived in national politics (although divided into factions acknowledging different leaders). The new party which was formed to oppose Jackson called itself 'Whig,' thus emphasizing its opposition to personal regime. Jackson's party, on the other hand, adopted the name of 'Democratic' Party.

The division between the two parties was essentially the same as that between Republicans and Federalists. On the one hand, there were the interests favouring protective tariffs and stable currency; on the other, agrarian interests calling for credit facilities and unchecked State autonomy. The Whig platform of 1844 contained the following planks: 'A well-regulated

<sup>1</sup> Hart, *ibid.* p. 551.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 256.



currency; a tariff for revenue to defray the necessary expenses of the Government, and discriminating with special reference to the domestic labour of the country; the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of the public lands; a single term for the presidency; a reform of executive usurpations; an administration of practical efficiency, controlled by a well-regulated and wise economy.<sup>1</sup> The Democrats, on the other hand, put forward a programme in 1840 which demanded the curtailment of the prerogatives of the Federal Government, deprecated protective tariffs which 'cherish one portion of the country to the injury of another,' denied the right of Congress to charter a national bank, and denounced all interference with states' rights, especially with regard to slavery.<sup>2</sup>

Jackson first clashed with Congress over the issue of renewing the charter of the United States Bank, which he vetoed in 1832. In his veto message, he referred to the bank as a 'danger to our liberty and independence,' which infringed upon the President's 'own delegated powers' as well as 'the reserved rights of the states.'<sup>3</sup> The President's action was conducted on behalf of agricultural credit-seekers whom he wanted to protect from a strong national financial group. He subsequently withdrew public funds from the United States Bank and placed them in state banks which were more accessible to the wishes of local agricultural interests. In order to satisfy the demand for new credits, the state banks issued paper currency. The credit inflation was largely responsible for the economic crisis of 1837, and Jackson himself repudiated the new paper currency.

Jackson greatly increased his power by distributing Federal offices to his partisans. The 'spoils system,' which after his time remained a characteristic feature of American political life, was justified by the democratic principle of 'rotation in office.' This principle especially appealed to agricultural groups, which were distrustful of any professional and permanent civil service. In his first annual message Jackson said: 'There are, perhaps, few men who can for any great length of time enjoy office and power

<sup>1</sup> Cf. James Albert Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States*, New York and London 1914, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 53 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* pp. 325, 328.

without being more or less under the influence of feelings unfavourable to the discharge of their duties.' He held that 'the duties of all public officers are, or at least admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance.'<sup>1</sup>

All this was, of course, eagerly discussed between Whigs and Democrats. The issue overshadowing all others was slavery.

Slavery existed on a large scale in the southern states of the Union, where it was the basis of extensive cotton (and rice) production. The north and west, however, viewed southern slavery with increasing hostility. The working class resented competition by cheap slave labour. The farmers realized that gigantic plantations engulfed all land free for settlement in territories where slavery was introduced. These material interests were supported by a wave of emotional feeling denouncing slavery as inhuman and anti-Christian.

The main champion of the anti-slavery crusade was William Lloyd Garrison, whose *Liberator* was founded in 1831. The Anti-Slavery Societies of New England and of America followed shortly.

Garrison's crusade was religious in its inspiration. His rejection of slavery followed from the condemnation of force in general. Garrison was a religious Anarchist. His doctrine was that of 'non-resistance.' The New England Non-resistance Society, founded by him and Noyes, stipulated that its members could not 'acknowledge allegiance to any human government,' but also were to refrain from resisting it. The Non-resisters were pledged to abstain from voting and holding office, and not to invoke the aid of courts on any ground whatsoever. The Peace Convention, held in Boston in 1838, declared in its platform: 'As every human government is upheld by physical strength, and its laws are virtually enforced at the point of the bayonet, we cannot hold any office which imposes upon its incumbents the obligation to compel men to do right on pain of imprisonment or death . . . we cannot sue any man at law to compel him by force to restore anything which he may have wrongfully taken from us or others; but if he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 255.

has seized our coat, we shall surrender up our cloak rather than subject him to punishment.' <sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of non-resistance opposed the kingdom of God to earthly kingdoms. Its aim was to establish in America a society conforming to the divine law, just the same as that of Puritanism; but the interpretation of God's will has changed. Its essence was no longer seen in biblical correctness, but in humanitarianism.

To Garrison and his followers slavery was a moral and religious issue. They swept aside all legal arguments which might be invoked to justify its maintenance. Garrison called the Constitution 'a covenant with death and an agreement with hell,' because it implicitly recognized slavery.

In the southern states, slavery had its defenders who invoked philosophical and moral arguments with a sincerity equal to that of the abolitionists. One of the characteristic arguments of pro-slavery writers was that the slaves, who were cared for by their masters, were in reality better off than free labourers in the northern manufacturing cities or in England. One of the southern books replying to Mrs Beecher Stowe's famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was entitled *Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia and Tom without One in Boston*.<sup>2</sup>

The defenders of slavery also sought to discredit the fundamental tenets of original freedom and equality upon which the anti-slavery doctrine was based. Governor Hammond spoke of the 'much-lauded but nowhere accredited theory of Mr Jefferson that all men are born equal.'<sup>3</sup> Dr Cooper said in his *Elements of Political Economy*: 'The universal law of nature is force. By this law the lower animals are subdued to man, and the same law governs the relations between men . . . there is no body of natural rights obtained independently of all government, but only those rights which the society considers it expedient to grant.'<sup>4</sup> Some southern theorists denied that Negroes were descended from Adam, and others asserted that they were the descendants of Ham, whose race was cursed by God and nature.<sup>5</sup>

The question discussed in practical politics, however, was not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 211 f.

<sup>2</sup> For this and other references, see Gettell, *ibid.* p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 236 f.

whether slavery was right or wrong. No serious politician at first proposed that it should be abolished in the states where the institution was in force. The question was solely how far slavery was to be recognized or guaranteed under federal authority outside the southern states—for instance, whether federal authorities should return fugitive slaves to their owners from the northern or 'free' states. Still more important was the question whether slavery should be introduced as a legal institution in the western territories newly acquired by the Union. It was this question which ultimately led to rupture and civil war.

At first the method applied in solving this problem was that of compromise, aiming to maintain the equilibrium between the 'slave' and the 'free' states. Under the 'Missouri Compromise' (1820) it was stipulated that all newly organized territory south of 36° 30' would be 'slave,' all north of it 'free.' In spite of this compromise, however, the question flared up again and again. In 1850, when the question of organizing California, Utah, and New Mexico came up for consideration, a compromise proposed by Clay was adopted which revised the existing state of things slightly to the advantage of the 'free' states. The two established political parties, which had alternated in office since 1836, wished to shelve the issue. They launched the motto of 'finality,' not wishing to antagonize either the slave-holders or the abolitionists in their ranks. But in the country agitation continued. New political parties (the 'Free Soil Party,' the 'Know-Nothings') came into being, keeping the slavery issue alive.

Failure to take sides on slavery brought about the downfall of the Whig party after 1852 (when the Whig administration was decisively beaten at the polls). The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854, introducing slavery north of the Missouri line, mobilized the anti-slavery forces, and led to the formation of a new party under Lincoln's leadership, which was called the 'Republican' Party.

The Republican platform of 1856 did not propose abolition of slavery in the states where it was legal, but it asserted that 'it is both the right and the duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery,' and denied 'the authority of Congress, of a Territorial

legislature, of any individual or association of individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any Territory of the United States while the present Constitution shall be maintained.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1858 Lincoln stated the issue as follows: 'A house divided against itself cannot stand. This Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. The Union will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall be alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, north as well as south.'<sup>2</sup>

After Lincoln's election in 1860 the southern states seceded and civil war ensued. Lincoln's aim in combating the south was not emancipation. 'I would save the Union,' he wrote to Horace Greeley in 1862. 'I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. . . . If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.'<sup>3</sup> After the war had ended with the occupation of the south by the Union troops, the slavery question was solved in a radical fashion. All the slaves were freed, and the suffrage was bestowed on Negroes.

The Civil War closed a period of political thought in America. During the discussion on slavery, the basic political problem was that of the nature of the Union and of the extent of state sovereignty within the framework of the Constitution. The spokesman of the south challenged the theory of 'divided' sovereignty and maintained that the states retained their whole sovereignty even after establishing the Union.

The foremost champion of state sovereignty was John Caldwell Calhoun. In his *Disquisition on Government* and *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*, he rejected the theory of 'social contract' and of the 'state of nature,' and maintained that man's 'natural state is the social and political.' According to Calhoun, the supposed state of nature, which was said to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 100 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Hart, *ibid.* vol. iv, p. 399.

have preceded the establishment of government, was, 'instead of being the natural state of man . . . of all conceivable states, the most opposed to his nature, most repugnant to his feelings, and most incompatible with his wants.'<sup>1</sup> Government, accordingly, could not be regarded as a matter of voluntary choice; 'like breathing, it is not permitted to depend on our volition.'<sup>2</sup>

The implications of this thesis are clear. If government was not created *ex nihilo* by a voluntary act, then, on the one hand, there are no 'natural rights,' to be reserved for ever; and, on the other hand, the authority and sovereignty of established government is indivisible as well as imperishable. Hence the states of the Union could not give up any part of their sovereignty upon joining the Union, and the Constitution, instead of being a law, was merely a contract between sovereign states which could be denounced at any time.

The opposite view was stated by Daniel Webster, who, in a famous discussion with Hayne, in 1830, maintained that the Constitution was no 'contract,' but 'the result of a contract,' that is to say, a legal obligation. 'Sir,' he said, 'the very chief end, the main design, for which the whole Constitution was framed and adopted was, to establish a Government that should not be obliged to act through State agency, or depend on State opinion and State discretion. . . . No State law is to be valid which comes in conflict with the Constitution or any law of the United States.'<sup>3</sup>

All these questions, of course, became meaningless when unity was achieved 'with blood and iron.' The war closed an epoch. It disposed of the outstanding political issues of the preceding period, and made the road clear for the advent of corporate capitalism.

#### 4. CORPORATE CAPITALISM AND ORGANIZED POLITICS

The two-party system which has characterized American political life since the Civil War is essentially different from the party divisions existing in Europe. J. Bryce has observed that the antagonism between 'haves' and 'have-nots' plays a lesser

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Merriam, *ibid.* p. 269.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*    <sup>3</sup> Hart, *ibid.* vol. iii, p. 536 f.

role in American party politics than in Europe.<sup>1</sup> This, of course, cannot be taken to mean that that antagonism is less acute or less important in America than it is elsewhere. The struggle between 'haves' and 'have-nots' is the fundamental issue in American politics as it is in other countries. However, this issue in America has affected politics otherwise than in Europe.

We may observe, first of all, that American parties generally are more 'inclusive' than European ones; that is to say, they tend to represent all groups of society, while in Europe parties often identify themselves with an individual group or class. It is obvious that a party standing for one single group will probably be more 'radical' than one representing various interests. In the case of the two great American parties, party platforms as a rule are the result of a compromise between various contending groups. In Europe party programmes generally are untainted with compromise; parties are expected to compromise, or 'whittle down' their demands, in the course of their parliamentary work. This difference shows that the American voter's attitude towards his party is not the same as that of the European voter.

In Europe, and especially on the Continent, voters are primarily interested in the broad and general principles of the parties. They rally to one party or another because they agree with that party's ultimate aims. They very often regard their party as an agency serving to bring about an 'ideal' state of society. This does not mean that the European voter always deprecates compromises. The rank and file of 'moderate' parties generally take it for granted that political issues will be settled by compromise; just for this reason, however, they insist upon electing deputies having the 'right' attitude with regard to *ultimate* aims. Before voting for a candidate, they must be convinced that he can be trusted to do as much as possible for the general aims of the party.

The American voter's primary interest, on the other hand, is not in the general principles of the parties or in the 'ideal' society. He takes general formulae more or less for granted; his final decision is determined less by such formulae than by specific proposals, and, above all, by the personalities of the individual

<sup>1</sup> James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, New York 1893, new ed. 1913, vol. II, p. 16.

candidates. The record of the party being in power and asking for re-election plays a considerable role; thus, economic crises are often laid at the door of the administration and result in its overthrow. Two of the most notable 'landslides' of recent times, those of 1896 and 1932, followed upon business panics.

There is very little difference between the general attitudes and fundamental principles of the two great parties which alternate in power in our time. This may be explained by historical reasons.

The Democrats, as we have seen, are descended from the 'Republican' Party of Jefferson and the 'Democratic' Party of Jackson; that is to say, they originally stand for agrarian interests, linked up with states' rights. The Republicans, on the other hand, keep up the traditions of the Federalists and the Whigs; that is to say, they are primarily associated with the manufacturing east, with capitalism, with financial and industrial corporations. Thus, the original difference between the two parties seems to be a very marked one; they seem to be separated by the line between 'town' and 'country,' agrarianism and mercantilism. This, however, is no fundamental class division in a modern society, since neither the agrarian nor the urban sector is homogeneous. In the industrial sector, there is the antagonism between capital and labour; in the agrarian one, a possible clash of interests between farmers and big landowners. Accordingly, oppositional groups in the 'domain' of either party often joined the rival party. Certain proletarian groups in the eastern cities are traditionally Democratic, while farmers in the north-western states generally support the Republican party (the Party which originally opposed the slave-holding plantation owners in the south). This is how all group interests came to be represented in both parties. As a result, both parties often find it difficult to define their policy on controversial issues, since they do not want to antagonize any group of possible voters. It is true that both parties still have their own 'physiognomy,' determined by certain traditional and characteristic groups of followers, such as the 'solid south' supporting the Democrats, or New England business men backing the Republicans. But individuals and groups of the same class and social status are found among the rank and file of both parties, and, consequently, there is no sharp ideological division between



them. This means that both parties can compete for the votes of the same electors, and that, consequently, they can alternate in power without fundamental changes of policy.

It would seem, then, that the only difference between the two parties is their separate existence, and that the only real issue decided by their rivalry is whose protégés will obtain jobs after the elections. Stressing this side of American party life, Max Weber characterized the two big parties as 'patronage parties.'<sup>1</sup> We may point out, however, that, although, in the course of their evolution, the two parties often became indistinguishable from each other as far as their platforms were concerned, their original and divergent characters again and again came to the surface.

For example, one of the traditional policies of the Democratic Party is bi-metallism, while the Republican Party stands for orthodox finances and the gold standard. In 1892, however, there was no clear-cut division between the two parties on this issue; apparently both were anxious to obtain as many pro-gold and pro-silver votes as possible. Thus the Republican platform acknowledged that the 'American people, from tradition and interest, favour bi-metallism,' while the Democrats advocated, not only bi-metallism, but also 'parity of the two metals and the equal power of every dollar at all times in the markets and in the payment of debts,'<sup>2</sup> thus reassuring their gold-standard voters. This identity of views, however, did not last long. In 1896 Bryan, the leader of the 'left wing' of the Democratic Party and an uncompromising silver man, defeated Grover Cleveland at the Democratic nominating convention, and the party adopted a platform calling for 'the free and unlimited coinage of both gold and silver . . . and that silver, equally with gold, shall be a full legal tender for all debts, public and private.'<sup>3</sup>

On the question of protective tariffs, too, the views of the two parties tended to differ. The Republicans, closely allied to manufacturing interests, often went on record as favouring protective tariffs, while the Democrats traditionally championed free trade (as more in keeping with the interests of the farmer). The Democrats' advocacy of this and other specifically agrarian

<sup>1</sup> Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen 1922, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 161 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 165.

demands, however, was anything but radical. This repeatedly led to the emergence of 'third parties,' maintaining the agrarian programme in its purity.

One of the most important issues after the Civil War may be described as 'Farmers versus Railways' and 'Farmers versus Financiers.'

The period immediately following the Civil War was one of feverish railroad building. As all states were anxious to possess railways, it was easy for the big railroad companies to acquire concessions and grants of land, along with direct subsidies. The opening of railroad lines, of course, brought great benefits to the regions concerned; the farmers, however, suffered in many ways. First of all, the lands granted to the railroad companies were bound to be the most valuable ones, and they were not available to the farmers. Much good land was also bought up by speculators. Land prices went up, and farmers found it increasingly difficult to make profits. They complained, above all, about the rate policy of the railroad companies. Freight rates were fixed so that transportation in many cases ate up profits altogether. The farmers' grievances against the railroads inspired the 'Granger' movement, an anti-railroad 'crusade' in the seventies.<sup>1</sup>

Another issue of vital interest to the farmers was credit and currency. The farmers were an indebted class, and their situation tended to become desperate when prices followed a downward trend (as in the seventies and eighties). During such periods the farmers' debt charges increased in proportion to their income, and they were threatened with ruin. The stock remedy recommended by the farmers in such situations was the creation of 'fiat money,' that is to say, one form or another of inflation. Orthodox theorists of finance have always condemned such policies as demagogic, ineffective, and ruinous. Bryce remarks: 'It seems incredible that there should still be masses of civilized men who believe that money is value, and that a liberal issue of stamped paper can give the poor more bread and better clothes.'<sup>2</sup> It cannot be denied, however, that an extension of the volume of credit (and not only of the amount of money in circulation) is apt to affect the price-level and the distribution of real incomes as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gettell, *ibid.* p. 419 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41 f.

between the debtor and creditor classes, and that a policy of 'contraction,' although applied in the name of 'sound finance,' may upset economic relations between the classes to the same degree as a policy of inflation.

Such a period of 'contraction' was that following the Civil War. The war had been financed largely by the issue of Government notes ('greenbacks') which were gradually withdrawn from circulation after the war ended. This operation was followed by a fall in commodity prices and by general restriction of credits. The farmers, as the worst hit among debtor groups, vigorously protested and demanded legislation extending the circulation of 'greenbacks.' The attitude of Congress and of the big parties was characteristic. They did not want to antagonize the farmers, because this would have meant loss of votes; on the other hand, they could not afford consistently to antagonize the financial interest. Thus, measures for and against the 'greenbacks' alternated with each other.

Such situations were always apt to give rise to 'third-party' movements, and, accordingly, a 'third party' cropped out of the 'greenback' controversy. In 1876 Peter Cooper was nominated as the 'Greenback' candidate for the presidency. The party's platform demanded the immediate and unconditional repeal of the Specie Resumption Act of 1875, which barred debt payments in notes, and declared: 'We believe that a United States note, issued directly by the Government and convertible on demand into United States obligations, bearing a rate of interest not exceeding 3.65 per cent per annum, and exchangeable for United States notes at par, will afford the best circulating medium ever devised. Such United States notes should be full legal tender . . . and we hold that it is the duty of the Government to provide such a circulating medium, and insist in the language of Thomas Jefferson that bank paper must be suppressed and the circulation restored to whom it belongs.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1880 the 'Greenback and Labour' platform included not only the demand for note circulation, but also working-class demands such as the eight-hour day; it also renewed the Grangers' battle-cry against the railroads.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 145.

Thus the movements originating from agricultural demands tended to become left wing movements of a more general character. This applies especially to the 'People's Party' or 'Populist' movement, the most important to date of 'third parties.'

The People's Party (1890) was a party of social reform, reminiscent of European left wing parties. It came into being during a period of economic depression, and stated the traditional doctrine of the south and west in a new form, stressing the 'class struggle' against monopolies and financial interests. The Populists demanded legislation to bring the railways under Government control, the stopping of the purchase of land by speculators, the issue of Government paper notes, and the free coinage of silver.

The Populist platform of 1892 declared: 'We meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the legislatures, Congress, and even touches the ermine of the Bench. The people are demoralized. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced, business prostrated, our homes covered with mortgages, labour impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes of tramps and millionaires.' The platform included the following demands:

'1. On money and taxation:

(a) The free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the legal ratio of 16 to 1.

(b) That Government paper money should take the place of bank-notes, and that the amount of this circulating medium be increased to \$50.00 per capita.

(c) That the money of the country be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people and hence all State and National revenue be limited to necessary expenses of Government economically administered.

(d) Opposition to the issue of bonds.

(e) That postal savings-banks be established by the Government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

(f) A graduated income tax, to force the holders of great wealth to contribute according to their ability to the needs of the Government.

## 2. On Transportation:

Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the Government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people.

The telegraph and the telephone, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated in the interest of the people.

## 3. Land:

All lands held by railroads or other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands owned by aliens, should be reclaimed by the Government and held open for settlement.<sup>1</sup>

The outstanding features of this platform are its broadly democratic and humanitarian spirit and the fact that it proposes to cure the ills of the agricultural society by socialistic methods. The fusion between agrarian and socialistic thought is characteristic of the American political scene. Thus, it is significant that Henry George, the most original contributor to socialistic thought in America, should have based his theory on the problem of land monopoly and land speculation.<sup>2</sup> To him, all social injustice originated in the holding of vast tracts of land by non-producers, and in the appropriation by individuals of the increments of value created by society. Thus, the interests of farmers and labourers appeared to be essentially identical. This fitted well into the political tradition of the agrarian community, especially in the west, where movements such as the Populist one had been most successful.

Throughout this period, the attitude of Congress and of the big parties was characterized by two considerations. The parties

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 153 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vernon Louis Parrington, *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America* (*Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. iii), New York 1930, pp. 125 ff.

were controlled by financial interests, and, consequently, they were unable to embark upon a radical financial policy; on the other hand, however, they depended on popular elections, and hence could not afford to ignore popular demands. Thus, public opinion did, to a certain extent, influence the policies of Congress; but the influence of organized interests, working through uncontrollable channels, was vastly greater than that of public opinion.

One of the decisive factors influencing the attitude of parties was the power of organized capital. During the period under survey, both parties accepted contributions from groups of capitalists, and it was common knowledge that many individual senators looked after the interests of individual corporations. Various groups of industrialists subsidized both parties in order to be able to put through legislative measures, especially in connection with tariffs.

\* Thus, in 1894, H. O. Havemeyer, president of the Sugar Trust, testifying before a Senate committee, admitted that the trust regularly contributed to the funds of both parties. 'In the state of New York,' he said, 'where the Democratic majority is between forty and fifty thousand, we throw our contribution their way. In the state of Massachusetts, where the Republican party is dominant, they probably have the call. Wherever there is a dominant party, wherever the majority is very large, that is the party that gets the contribution, because that is the party which controls the local matters.'<sup>1</sup> In 1896 the banks heavily subsidized the Republican Party. According to a circular letter sent to the bankers in Pittsburgh, 'the banks in New York and some other places have been contributing on the basis of one quarter of one per cent of their combined capital and surplus, and the National Committee requests us to ask the Pittsburg banks to do the same.'<sup>2</sup> This system of openly subsidizing the parties naturally aroused strong popular feeling, as a result of which certain laws tending to restrict contributions to party funds were passed. Thus, in 1907, corporations were forbidden to finance the campaign expenses of parties in federal elections, and another law, passed in 1911, required that all donations to the various

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 409.

candidates should be made public. These laws, of course, did not end the parties' dependence on big business, although they did result in a certain lowering of campaign expenses.

The close interrelation between politics and business is part of what is called the 'spoils system.'<sup>1</sup> This expression may be traced back to a speech in the Senate in which the New York Senator Marcy, an adherent of Jackson, in 1832, defended the policy prevailing in his state, under which offices were distributed to the followers of the winning party. 'They see,' he said, 'nothing wrong in the rule that to the victors belong the spoils of the enemy.'<sup>2</sup>

The 'spoils' thus claimed for the victorious party are manifold; they include not only public offices, but also financial favours of all kinds. Under the spoils system, there were 'rings' organized to derive financial advantage from political connections with the party in power. In the eighties and nineties the alliance between crooked politics and corrupt big business seemed unconquerable. Nothing could break the monopoly of the big parties, and financially strong corporations were in a position directly to control their legislative activities. 'No European city,' says Bryce, 'has witnessed scandals approaching those of New York, where the public was in 1869-70 robbed on a vast scale, and accounts were systematically cooked to conceal the thefts, or the malversations that occurred in connection with the Philadelphia City Hall and with the erection of the Pennsylvania State Capitol at Harrisburg.'<sup>3</sup> Later developments showed, however, that the spoils system was not invincible. Public crusades against 'rings' and corrupt political combinations were often successful. Such crusades were especially effective if conducted by official party representatives. The parties, although interested in contributions from big business, could not renounce the services of the most notable reformers, in view of the latter's popularity. Thus, Woodrow Wilson became a national figure because of his successful fight against corruption in New Jersey.

<sup>1</sup> For the spoils system, see Woodburn, *ibid.* pp. 359 ff.; Bryce, *ibid.* pp. 120 ff., 156 ff., 379 ff.; Charles Edward Merriam, *The American Party System*, New York 1924, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *ibid.* p. 380. .

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 165.

Under the 'spoils system,' all public offices had been distributed on a strictly party basis. As early as in 1820 the Four-Year Law was passed, under which all terms of office were limited to four years, thus making a general redistribution of offices possible after each election. Under Jackson the distribution of appointments as rewards for party service had become an openly avowed principle of governmental policy. For Jackson, the control of public offices by amateurs chosen merely on the basis of their connection with the majority party was one of the essential conditions of democracy, and administration by professional experts a danger to it. Since his time, however, there has been a steady progress towards professional bureaucracy. Under the Pendleton Act of 1883, appointments to offices classified as requiring professional skill were placed on a 'merit' basis, that is to say, they were made to depend on the result of competitive examinations. The Act also forbade persons in public service to contribute to party funds—one of the outstanding characteristics of the 'spoils system.'<sup>1</sup> To-day it is generally recognized that non-political public offices as a rule should be administered by professional experts. Although there is not yet in the United States a professional civil service of a standing comparable to that of certain European countries, the notion that 'rotation in office' and administration by amateurs is essential to democracy is definitely a thing of the past.

Although the 'spoils system' and the corruption inherent in it have lost much of their importance, legislative activities continue to be influenced by extra-parliamentary forces. Constant pressure is being brought to bear upon the legislatures in the name of legitimate group interests. Political issues are largely determined by such organized pressure.

Foremost among organizations representing group interests are the trade unions. Under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, the American Federation of Labour adopted the principle that it could better promote working-class aims by using its organized strength to influence the policy of the major parties than by backing an independent political party. 'Labour's unsuccessful promotion of the Henry George campaign in 1888 convinced Gompers that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* pp. 577 ff.



the road to power did not lie in independent political action.<sup>1</sup> The various Labour Parties of the last half-century (for instance, the Socialist Party led by Eugene Debs) were hopeless minorities. The federation, on the other hand, did use its influence to secure favourable legislation; but it long opposed such institutions as unemployment insurance or old age pensions, because it feared Government interference with its independence. These 'radical' demands were forced upon the federation by unskilled workers who needed Government support more than the *élite* of skilled workers.<sup>2</sup>

Legislation also has long been influenced by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, standing for various business interests.<sup>3</sup> It may be said generally that American political life is dominated by 'pressure groups' representing economic or even purely moral interests, such as the once powerful Anti-Saloon League. According to Merriam, 'more acts of government are the result of pressure from special groups or from public sentiment than from party platform or party guidance.'<sup>4</sup> As a result, the original distinctive features of the big parties are disappearing, and both show a tendency to compete for the popular vote by 'progressive' legislation. Both parties occasionally adopted the role of defender of the public against private monopolies. Thus the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, adopted in 1890, makes it unlawful to 'monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire, with any other person or persons, to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations,'<sup>5</sup> and, since that law was enacted, many others followed, carrying further and further the fight against the trusts and monopolies.

Party leaders with a strong 'pull' for popular votes often were able to impose upon their parties a policy directed against big business, even though the parties themselves may have been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John R. Commons, *History of Labor in the United States*, 1921, vol. ii, p. 458, quoted in Philip Taft, 'Labor's Changing Political Line,' in the *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. xiv, p. 634.

<sup>2</sup> Taft, *ibid.* p. 638.

<sup>3</sup> For the rôle played by the American Federation of Labour and by the Chamber of Commerce, see H. L. Childs, *Labor and Capital in National Politics*, Columbus 1930.

<sup>4</sup> *American Party System*, p. 304.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 591 f.

controlled by financial interests. Thus Theodore Roosevelt for a long time could dominate the pre-War Republican party, although the party 'machine' resented his anti-corporation policies. Roosevelt and the other 'progressive' leaders of his day, such as Woodrow Wilson or Robert La Follette, represented the middle-class reaction to the tendency of corporate capitalism to engulf all the smaller economic units. They mobilized the country's political energies, and reawakened the belief, dormant for some time, that a threatening economic fate may be averted by political action.

The most characteristic feature of 'progressive' policy is its emphasis upon Government regulation of business. Such a policy tends to be especially popular in times of economic crisis. The policy of *laissez-faire* is essentially conservative. Such a policy may prevail in times of prosperity, when there is no great popular agitation and the party bosses may have their way. During periods of prospering business and rising prices, it has happened that the Republicans, running on a conservative, high-tariff platform, received many working-class votes, as workers considered protective tariffs as a safeguard for their high standard of living. In times of depression, however, the trend is for 'progressive' reform and Government intervention. To the new democracy, the power of Government is no longer the enemy of 'freedom.' The masses feel that the enemy of their freedom is not Government, but economic privilege, and they have discovered that the power of Government can be used to curb that privilege.

## 5. CRISIS AND INTERVENTION

Government interference with private business has assumed unprecedented dimensions with the 'New Deal,' proclaimed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. The New Deal era marks the apex of interventionist political thinking in the United States. We shall deal with it briefly from this point of view; a complete analysis of New Deal policies cannot, of course, be attempted.

It would be wrong to assume, of course, that prior to the New Deal the United States had been a paradise of 'rugged individualism.' The regulation of business by the Government is as old as the United States. We may recall that, under the Constitution, it has always been one of the duties of Congress to regulate interstate commerce; this provision was responsible for the fact that the American Congress was more intimately concerned with business problems than most other parliaments. Long before Roosevelt's time, there was legislation on labour conditions, on Government assistance to agriculture, and similar questions.<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt's reforms, however, went further than any earlier legislation.

First of all Roosevelt attempted to regulate the entire national industry, whereas earlier federal legislation only dealt with subjects specially reserved for Congress, such as interstate transportation. (Thus, for instance, the Adamson Eight-Hour Day Law of 1916 applied only to railways.) Secondly, the New Deal put under direct Government control such issues as had formerly been regulated exclusively by the law of supply and demand, that is to say, wages and prices. In these respects, the emergency legislation initiated by President Roosevelt may be described as unprecedented.

As is well known, this emergency legislation was called forth by the most severe economic crisis the United States has ever experienced. In March 1931 employment had sunk to 55.1 per cent of the average of 1926; the number of unemployed was estimated at from 12,000,000 to 14,000,000. Wages went down to 33.4 per cent of their pre-depression level, prices to 60.2 per cent, prices of farm products to 40.9 per cent (in February 1933). Industrial production was halved. In March 1933 iron production amounted to only 16.8 per cent of the 1929 average, automobile production to 27 per cent. In 1933 building projects totalled only about one-eighth of the volume they had reached in 1929. The aggregate deficit of 1,520 corporations in 1932 was estimated at \$100,000,000, whereas their aggregate profit in 1929 had been \$4,000,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles A. Beard and William Beard, *The American Leviathan*, New York 1930, pp. 494 ff., 512 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit*, vol. xii, pp. 20-32.

The emergency legislation introduced by President Roosevelt in combating this crisis, known as the 'New Deal,' differed in many respects from emergency measures taken in other countries.

In Germany, for instance, re-employment under the Hitler Government was largely brought about by Government orders for products of basic industries. The underlying idea was that production could be refloated at a minimum cost by taking advantage of the unused productive capacity of industry. This economic recipe coincided with the Government's desire for a big increase in armaments. In order to make the process of refloating industry as effective as possible, precautions were taken to keep production costs as low as possible. Thus, wages were not allowed to rise above the level to which they had sunk during the depression. In order to prevent wage movements, all trade unions were dissolved. On the other hand, measures were taken to assure the stability of prices.

The basic principle underlying Roosevelt's legislation was quite different. He intended to stimulate production by raising the masses' purchasing power. This was one of the objectives of the National Industrial Recovery Act, adopted on 16th June 1933. As Roosevelt himself said when he signed the Act: 'The law I have just signed was passed to put people back to work—to let them buy more of the products of the farms and factories and start our business at a living rate again. . . . It seems to me to be equally plain that no business which depends for existence on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country . . . and by living wages I mean more than a bare subsistence level—I mean the wages of decent living.'<sup>1</sup>

Since it was realized that wages could be raised and working hours shortened only if it was guaranteed that no firm would attempt to compete by means of lower wages and shorter working hours, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) introduced 'codes of fair competition,' which were submitted to all engaged in the various trades and industries for voluntary acceptance. On 30th November 1934 there were 731 such codes approved or

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Charles A. Beard and George H. E. Smith, *The Future Comes. A Study of the New Deal*, New York 1934, p. 144.

submitted for approval.<sup>1</sup> On 1st October 1934 over 95 per cent of the nation's industries and trades were operating either under Codes of Fair Competition or the President's Re-employment Agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Another feature of the NIRA distinguishing it from the German recovery programme was the stress it laid upon collective organization, especially of labour.

Section 7A of the NIRA declared that 'employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labour, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives or in self-organization or in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection,' and that 'no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union or to refrain from joining, organizing, or assisting a labour organization of his own choosing.' This section was epoch-making in the history of American labour. It was directed especially against those employers who insisted upon the formation of 'company unions,' enabling them to deal with their own employees exclusively instead of with nation-wide labour organizations. However, it turned out to be rather difficult to determine which union was that of the workers' 'own choosing,' and the claims of rival unions led to long and bitter labour struggles in which the 'Committee of Industrial Organization,' headed by John L. Lewis, played an especially important part.

One section of Roosevelt's emergency legislation was devoted to agriculture. The Agricultural Adjustment Act provided for a reduction of acreages, combined with subsidies, and for the refinancing of agricultural mortgages. Its purpose was, above all, to increase agricultural incomes by economic 'planning.' This, in the words of Secretary for Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, was to be achieved by 'adjusting our agriculture to the market that actually exists,' and correcting the 'wide disparity between the prices of the things the farmer sells and the things he buys.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The World Almanac*, 1935, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Beard and Smith, *ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Under the emergency legislation of 1933 the Government assumed a new and unprecedented role—that of an arbiter in all conflicts and differences between social classes. Everybody admitted that this constituted a departure from American political tradition, but opinions differed as to the degree and meaning of this rupture with the past. The President himself, his associates and adherents, maintained that the New Deal, while introducing novel methods of organization and economic planning, retained all essential features of American liberty. The NIRA was contrasted with both Communism and State Socialism as something essentially liberal.

‘It is,’ Walter Lippmann says, ‘often assumed in current discussion that all the nations must make an exclusive choice between the old theoretically neutral State on the one hand, or some form of absolute collectivism and directed economy on the other. . . . Yet there exists a radically different method which is actually in use in most of the free countries . . . a method of social control which is not *laissez-faire*, which is not Communism, which is not Fascism. . . . I shall call it the method of free collectivism.’<sup>1</sup> And he explains: ‘Under free collectivism, the Government in its economic activities is in effect a gigantic public corporation which stands ready to throw its weight into the scales wherever and whenever it is necessary to redress the balance of private transactions. The initiative, throughout the whole realm of production and consumption, excepting only public utilities and public works reserved as instruments of compensatory control, remains in individual hands. This initiative is subjected not to official plan and to administrative orders, but to the play of prices. . . . Within extremely wide limits enterprise is free.’<sup>2</sup>

The social philosophy underlying Roosevelt’s emergency legislation is not revolutionary. He does not want to destroy the existing social order, but to make it satisfactory for all. His reforms serve the purpose of making sure that no class has any reason to be a revolutionary class. ‘I plead not for a class control but for a true concert of interests,’ he said in his book *Looking Forward*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Method of Freedom*, London 1934, p. 45 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57 f.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Beard and Smith, *ibid.* p. 136.

Under the Roosevelt programme the Government was to stand between the classes, assuring a fair balance between them. Accordingly, one of the students of the New Deal remarked that 'several of its most important measures afford striking illustrations of middle-class politics.'<sup>1</sup> In fact, however, the Administration never maintained a completely neutral attitude in class conflicts. The emergency programme treated the autonomous organization of labour as an end in itself rather than as a means to ensure recovery, and in labour conflicts the President consistently exercised his influence in the interests of labour. Consequently the proletariat increasingly regarded Roosevelt as its own president (this, together with his agricultural relief programme, decided Roosevelt's overwhelming re-election victory in 1936), but employers, aware of the fact that a process of social transition at their expense was being initiated under the President's auspices, labelled him a 'revolutionary.'

One of the critics, aroused by Roosevelt's 'unfairness' towards capital, declares: 'The fact that the Administration has been sympathetic and large-hearted and that some of its acts have been wise should not be allowed to conceal the further fact that, under the guise of relieving unemployment and helping industry and trade to recover, it has made a fifth of the American people its financial dependents, levied upon three-fourths of the population who do not live from the land heavy contributions for the support of the remaining one-fourth who are farmers, exposed every office, shop, and plant to attack by a particular form of union labour, set up direct Government competition with private business, and claimed a right of executive veto wherever capital is employed.'<sup>2</sup> According to this critic, 'no code restrictions . . . were imposed upon organized workers; no compliance boards were set up to see that unfair practices were not indulged in or that agreements were kept. Employers alone were bound, and for them alone the machinery of enforcement was devised.'<sup>3</sup> And, turning to the constitutional angle of the problem, he concludes: 'For most practical purposes and in spirit even more than

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *Government in a Planned Democracy*, New York 1935, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> William MacDonald, *The Menace of Recovery*, New York 1934, p. 352 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 358 f.

in form, the Government of the United States to-day is a presidential dictatorship marked with a pronounced Socialist interest.' <sup>1</sup>

The charge most frequently made against the NIRA was, besides that of unfairness and dictatorship, that of economic unsoundness. 'The recovery programme,' the critic quoted above said, 'is shot through with economic fallacies and social vagaries. It is fallacious to imagine that the law of supply and demand can be repealed by Government intervention, or depression dissipated by forcible attempts to raise the general price level. It is fallacious to believe that wage increases will enlarge purchasing power if commodity prices also rise. It is foolishness to expect that industry or trade will be revived by compelling employers to pay more wages for less work or take more employees than they need. It is utterly visionary to think of coping with debt and economic disorder by spending more money, piling up more debt, and raising taxes.' <sup>2</sup>

Whether the New Deal would have brought about the ultimate collapse of the capitalist system cannot be determined, since its operation has been stopped by the Supreme Court. The NIRA was declared unconstitutional in May 1935, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act in January 1936. Thus, the codes adopted under the NIRA had to be discontinued. There is, of course, a lasting heritage of the NIRA period: a vastly increased and more active organization of labour.

The legislative work undertaken by President Roosevelt after the downfall of the NIRA has been inspired by the same principles as his recovery programme. Thus he introduced a 'social security' programme, calling for old age pensions and better housing. Under the National Housing Act of 24th June 1934 mortgage credits amounting to \$1,000,000,000, serving for the building of better homes, were to be guaranteed by the Government. An even more ambitious housing problem was launched recently; but its effectuation was made more difficult by the fact that the President, aware of the danger inherent in mounting prices, decided to combine it with an action aiming at reducing wages and prices. Thus the President is apparently determined to meet a menacing economic crisis by conservative methods.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 363 f.



It seems, then, that no new social and political system, such as 'free collectivism' or 'reconstructed individualism' emerged from the reconstruction era; what has been achieved was the strengthening of the Government's ascendancy over private business and the working out of certain methods to influence the distribution of national income in favour of the working class and of the farming population.

## 6. AMERICA AND EUROPE (TRENDS IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY)

The first foreign political issue emerging after the establishment of the United States as an independent power was that of pro-French against pro-British sentiment. During the War of Independence, of course, anti-British feeling was universal, except for the Loyalist minority; after the termination of the war, however, sharp division on this point became apparent.

The Federalists, who were associated with eastern trading interests, favoured friendship and co-operation with Britain, the States' most important trade partner. The Republicans, whose main strength lay in the agricultural section, deeply resented this. For them, Britain was identified with tyranny, and they suspected the Federalists of scheming with British help to do away with popular liberties. The outbreak of the French Revolution deepened this antagonism. The conservative element, horrified by events in France, used them as arguments against the pro-French Republicans; the Republicans accused the Federalists of royalism, and denounced them for forgetting the debt of gratitude the United States owed to France for her help in the War of Independence.

An anonymous open letter to President Washington, published in 1793 and attributed to Jefferson but disclaimed by him, declared that citizens were, 'from one extremity of the Union to the other, firmly attached to the cause of France.' Referring to Washington's proclamation of neutrality of 22nd April 1793, which urged that the country should 'with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the

belligerent Powers,'<sup>1</sup> the letter protested that Americans were not 'so far divested of the feelings of men, as to treat with "impartiality," and equal "friendship," those tigers, who so lately deluged our country with the blood of thousands.'<sup>2</sup>

The Republicans deeply resented the conclusion of the Jay Treaty with Britain in 1794, Article I of which declared: 'There shall be a firm, inviolable, and universal peace, and a true and sincere friendship between his Britannic Majesty, his heirs and successors, and the United States of America.'<sup>3</sup> An ardent pro-Jeffersonian, Dr Nathaniel Ames, wrote in his diary on 31st March 1795: 'To the glorious success of the French Republic against the British combin'd Powers, not the Justice or moderation of England or the Merits of our Envoy are we indebted for our continuance in peace with the insolent English.'<sup>4</sup> As relations with France became strained because of interference with American navigation, Dr Ames's comments grew more and more indignant. On 28th March 1798 he wrote: 'An infamous Gallomania<sup>5</sup> seiz'd the cocadoodle doo Govt,' and, on 3rd July, remarked: 'War against France in effect, contrary to wish of Landlords.'<sup>6</sup> A later entry (of 27th December 1798) said: 'It is astonishing to consider the mean servility to which a War party in this country can stoop in favour of Britain against our Benefactors the French.'<sup>7</sup>

The Federalist leader, Hamilton, acidly commented on this pro-French 'sentimentalism.' In a letter to Colonel Edward Carrington of Virginia, written on 26th May 1792, dealing with Jefferson and his followers, he said: 'In respect to our foreign politics, the views of these gentlemen are, in my judgment, equally unsound, and dangerous. THEY HAVE A WOMANISH ATTACHMENT TO FRANCE, AND A WOMANISH RESENTMENT AGAINST GREAT BRITAIN. They would draw us into the closest embrace of the former, and involve us in all the consequences of her politics; and they would risk the peace of the country, in their endeavours, to keep us at the greatest possible distance from the latter.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MacDonald, *Source Book*, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> The doctor means 'Gallophobia.'

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 338.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hart, *ibid.* vol. iii, p. 305 f.

<sup>5</sup> Hart, *ibid.* p. 336.

<sup>6</sup> Hart, *ibid.* p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 291.

The Hartford convention of the Federalists, which met in December 1814, while the war with England was still going on, denounced that 'ruinous war,' and stated one of the causes of this 'fatal reverse' to be 'hostility to Great Britain, and partiality to the late Government of France, adopted as coincident with popular prejudice, and subservient to the main object, party power.'<sup>1</sup>

Whereas, in these early discussions on foreign policy, the main question seems to be whether the United States should side with France or Britain, an independent and genuinely American foreign policy is proclaimed in President Monroe's message of 2nd December 1823, enunciating the so-called 'Monroe doctrine.'

When this message was delivered, the Holy Alliance was considering the proposal to help the Spanish monarchy of reduce to subservience the former Spanish colonies in America, which had asserted their independence during the preceding war period. In outlining the United States' attitude towards this question, Monroe formulated two basic principles for American foreign policy: first, aloofness from European antagonisms; and, second, determination to prevent any European power from interfering with the independence of any American nation.

The message said, among other things: 'In the wars of the European powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded, or seriously menaced, that we resent injuries, or make preparations for our defence. With the movements in this hemisphere we are, of necessity, more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different. . . . We owe it . . . to candour, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers, to declare, that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence, and

<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, *ibid.* p. 294 f.

maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States.’<sup>1</sup>

The Monroe doctrine may be looked at from different angles. It may be considered as a document of American isolation from Europe, but also as one of United States hegemony in America. Under the doctrine, the United States assumed responsibility for peace and order on the American continent. This was an essential condition of the continent’s capitalistic penetration.

The possible economic role which the United States could play under the ‘American system’ was realized at an early stage. In a speech passionately pleading for the cause of South American freedom, delivered on 24th May 1818, Henry Clay declared: ‘The precious metals are in South America, and they will command the articles wanted in South America, which will purchase them. Our navigation will be benefited by transportation, and our country will realize the mercantile profits. Already the item in our exports of American manufactures is respectable. They go chiefly to the West Indies and to Spanish America. This item is constantly augmenting.’<sup>2</sup> The raw-material-producing countries of Latin America presented themselves to the United States as possible markets for manufactured goods, and as possible fields for capital investments. The Monroe doctrine was to make Latin America safe for capitalists.

Safeguarding the interests of United States capital in Latin American countries has subsequently become one of the main driving forces of United States’ foreign policy, which at times overshadowed relations between the United States and her neighbours. During one of the periods of tension with Mexico, caused by the necessity of defending capital investments there, President Woodrow Wilson remarked: ‘I have to pause and remind myself that I am President of the United States and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 319 f.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Randolph Greenfield Adams, *A History of the Foreign Policy of the United States*, New York 1924, p. 171.

not of a small group of Americans with vested interests in Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the foreign policy of the United States was largely determined by the country's territorial expansion. Louisiana, originally an immense territory extending from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada and the Pacific coast, was purchased from the French during the Napoleonic wars; Florida was acquired from Spain. For the possession of Texas, a war was waged with Mexico; on the whole, however, expansion over the continent has been pacific. Large numbers of settlers usually preceded the flag, and new territories were politically incorporated at the express wish of the inhabitants.

After the end of the period of continental expansion, a new issue appeared: colonial expansion beyond the nation's frontiers. American imperialism selected as its objects the rich, tropical islands in the Caribbean Sea, the Panama Isthmus, where a canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans could be built, islands in the Pacific, and Alaska.

The reasons for acquiring these possessions were manifold. They ranged from protection of the inhabitants from incompetent and unjust native or foreign rulers to economic necessities and positional advantages. It may be noted, however, that American opinion never was unanimous as to the necessity and wisdom of acquiring colonies. As a matter of fact, there had been opposition to the annexation of Texas (on the ground that it would mean the extension of slave-holding territory in the United States). Later on, the Republican Party has become the champion of imperialism and the Democratic Party opposed it. Thus, when Grover Cleveland succeeded Harrison in 1893, he dissociated himself from his predecessor's efforts to annex the Hawaiian Islands; four years later, when another Republican, McKinley, succeeded Cleveland, the action for annexation was immediately taken up again and brought to a successful conclusion.<sup>2</sup> W. J. Bryan, Democratic presidential candidate in 1900, made 'imperialism' an electoral issue, and denounced the Republicans' policy of colonization,<sup>3</sup> and finally, a Democratic president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, ended American semi-protectorates over Cuba and Haiti and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Adams, *ibid.* p. 259.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 279.

introduced legislation looking towards the independence of the Philippine Islands.

The American colonial empire, which is now in process of disintegration, was built up partly by means of peaceful penetration and partly by means of war. The Spanish-American War of 1899 deserves attention because it illustrates the ideological undercurrents which accompany war in the United States. The primary object of the war was to drive Spain out of her remaining colonial possessions in the western hemisphere. American public opinion demanded this, not because of any clash of interests between Spain and the United States, but out of indignation over Spain's methods in dealing with the revolutionary movement in Cuba. Without the stirring up of moral passions in the people, the war would not have come. The war was a crusade—waged to rid the western hemisphere of tyranny. Economic interests and land-hunger played a secondary role. In declaring war on Spain, Congress declared: 'The United States hereby disclaims any intention or disposition to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control, over said island [*sc.* Cuba], except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people.'<sup>1</sup> This did not hinder, of course, that, the war terminated, the United States claimed, and obtained, the possession of the Philippine Islands and of Puerto Rico. It was said in justification of this policy that the people of those islands were unable to govern themselves or to defend their independence, so that some other power would get hold of them if the United States did not.<sup>2</sup>

The Spanish-American War revealed some of the characteristics of the American attitude towards war. It showed that, for Americans, war is largely a moral issue. There is a fundamental difference between the European and the American attitude towards war. In Europe, many independent and armed nations share a small continent amongst each other. This means that peace can be maintained only as long as all want to maintain it. If there is a single nation which is determined to resort to war, many, if not all, other nations of the continent must take up arms, no matter how peaceful their own dispositions are. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 276.

Europeans look on war as at something which may be forced upon them. The European war ideology is that of 'defence'; this means that the question whether one 'should' go to war cannot be asked. For Europeans, war is no matter of voluntary choice but of sheer necessity.

The American outlook is different. Being an unrivalled economic and military power without dangerous neighbours, the United States considers war as something essentially avoidable. At the outbreak of each major conflict the first impulse of the United States is to 'keep out of it.' If Americans go to war at all, they must do so from their own choice. Their habitual ideology is that of neutrality; the alternative war ideology, however, is not that of 'defence' but of 'crusade.' It goes without saying that both ideologies—that of defence as well as that of crusade—may serve to disguise economic interests, or imperialistic motives.

The World War illustrated both American war attitudes. At first Americans observed neutrality; then, when they abandoned it, they did so in a crusading spirit.

At the beginning of the War President Wilson proclaimed neutrality, and then the United States went about the business of neutrals—providing belligerents with war supplies. This, however, immediately got her into trouble with both parties, since both determined to prevent their enemies from trading with America.

Thus the British, having proclaimed a blockade against Germany, stopped American vessels carrying goods to neutral neighbours of Germany, invoking the famous clause of 'continuous voyage' under which a shipment, ostensibly addressed to a neutral country, may be treated as contraband if its ultimate destination is in a belligerent country. A large section of American public opinion reacted violently. Britain was accused of unlawfully interfering with American neutral trade.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, feeling against Germany became stronger and stronger as Germans also started to interfere with American maritime trade, not merely by seizing ships but by sinking them. As human lives were lost, a 'crusade' sentiment against Germany developed.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of crusade finally overcame that of neutrality, and the United States entered the War.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 371 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 376 f.

For Wilson, war and peace to the end remained a moral issue. In January 1918 he announced his 'Fourteen Points,' proposing to end the War on a basis of open negotiations and self-determination for all peoples. Wilson called this proposal a 'Monroe doctrine applied to the whole world.'<sup>1</sup> At the Peace Conference he did what he could to induce the victor powers to abide by it. He succeeded in persuading them to establish a League of Nations, to act as guardian of the moral principles laid down in the Fourteen Points. Ironically, however, the United States herself stayed out of the League of Nations; the Republican majority which acquired control of Congress during Wilson's term succeeded in wrecking Wilson's League proposal. The crusade sentiment was spent; an overwhelming desire for neutrality reasserted itself.

During the post-War years the feeling became stronger and stronger that the abandonment of neutrality might have been avoided. Those responsible for America's entry into the War pointed out that the submarine issue could not be solved except by war;<sup>2</sup> it was suggested that, unless she decided to fight, the United States had to 'admit that her career as an independent nation was over.'<sup>3</sup> But the feeling remained that things might not have developed so far had not economic relations with the belligerents, especially with the Allied powers, become so intense that their victory could not be indifferent to America.

In order to safeguard the neutrality principle against such dangers, a neutrality law was adopted in August 1935, during the Abyssinian crisis, prohibiting munitions shipments to belligerents and other business transactions in time of war, and placing the munition industry under Government control. 'The most significant feature of the new legislation is its expression of the policy that it is not worth while to go to war for rights which were undoubtedly legal in 1914-17,' says a recent author.<sup>4</sup>

The spirit of crusade, however, is not wholly dead. One of the most characteristic features of post-War American policy consists

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Newton D. Baker, *Why We Went to War*, New York 1936, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. G. Adams, *ibid.* p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Flagg Beamis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, New York 1936, p. 662.



in repeated attempts at reconciling the principle of neutrality with that of crusade. The first such attempt was the Kellogg Pact of 1929, under which all important nations renounced war 'as an instrument of national policy'; a formula expressing the policy of neutrality as one of moral duty. Another instance of neutrality being suffused with a crusading spirit was President Roosevelt's declaration of 5th October 1935, declaring that American citizens continuing trade with Italy after the League's declaration of sanctions would do so at their own risk.

There, however, the matter does not rest. Isolation may still appear to most Americans as the most desirable of all policies; but there is some doubt as to whether it is possible. On 5th October 1937 President Roosevelt made a speech in Chicago which was received like an alarm signal throughout the nation. 'There is,' the President said, 'solidarity and interdependence about the modern world, both technically and morally, which makes it impossible for any nation completely to isolate itself from economic and political upheavals in the rest of the world. . . . There can be no stability or peace either within nations or between nations except under laws and moral standards adhered to by all. International anarchy destroys every foundation for peace. It jeopardizes either the immediate or the future security of every nation, large or small.' He reminded his countrymen that if war breaks out among the great nations 'let no one imagine that America will escape, that it may expect mercy, that this western hemisphere will not be attacked and that it will continue tranquilly and peacefully to carry on the ethics and the arts of civilization.' 'The peace-loving nations,' he declared further, 'must make a concerted effort in opposition to those violations of treaties and those ignorings of humane instincts which to-day are creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality.'<sup>1</sup>

These words mark thus far the climax of crusade sentiment as against neutrality in post-War America. It remains to be seen in what measure the nation will follow the President in this mood.

<sup>1</sup> *New York World Telegram*, 5th October 1937.

## 7. CONCLUSION: THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

We have mentioned one of the most conspicuous differences between American and European political thought, namely that political thinking in America tends to be less radical, and to lay less emphasis upon fundamental conceptions, than in Europe. In Europe political battles are fought between opposed principles, between conflicting conceptions of life; in the United States, the main issue often seems to be merely what particular person should occupy a certain position. Thus, it seems at the first glance that American political thinking is oriented towards persons rather than towards general issues. Yet it must be noted that, in a certain respect, America lays less emphasis upon 'leadership' than Europe. Leaders are chosen for their political pulling power, and they are retained as long as they possess such power. But when they cease to be of advantage to their party, they are quietly dropped. That type of uncompromising, quixotic allegiance to the one providential leader which is so familiar in European party life is unknown in America. The explanation is that, in Europe, the leader is identified with a fundamental principle, and thereby acquires absolute significance. In America, however, the question under discussion is not at all which fundamental principle ought to prevail, and, accordingly, no political leader could acquire prestige merely through being associated with a principle.

This explains a certain 'realistic' touch of American political life. We mean the fact that, in America, more attention is given to the concrete way in which a principle is applied than to the principle itself. The question of how to interpret a principle in a given concrete situation acquires an importance of its own. The role of the Constitution in American political life will illustrate this. The fundamental principles laid down in the Constitution are never questioned; they are taken for granted. The interpretation of the Constitution, however, has often been the object of bitter and violent struggle. The specific importance of the Supreme Court is mainly derived from this fact. As one of the agencies to which the interpretation of the Constitution is

entrusted, the Court is an organic factor of American political life. This was suddenly brought to general realization when President Roosevelt announced his plan to place the Court under the control of the executive. Protest against the scheme was nearly universal, and the plan had to be shelved.

Another trait distinguishing American from European political life is the greater importance of purely 'moral' issues. Thus, prohibition once was a major issue in America, and determined party division. Slavery, the issue leading to the worst internal conflict in American history, also was largely a 'moral' question. The greater weight of moral issues indicates that the front line separating classes is less rigid than elsewhere. Moral issues can acquire primary importance in societies where a certain fluctuation between social groups is possible.

The next question we shall examine is how these differences between European and American political life are to be explained.

We believe that the absence of feudalism must be considered as one of the chief reasons why American political life developed in its own, distinctive way. In Europe, capitalism could come into its own only by means of a fundamental change of the entire social system. No capitalist system of production was possible as long as society was controlled by feudalism. This is why political thinking in Europe was centred upon a question of 'principle'—the question whether the feudal or the *bourgeois* conception of life ought to prevail. This issue has no counterpart in American history; the *bourgeois* conception of life was not compelled to assert itself against a feudal upper class. Social power never was vested in a military upper caste, relying on a big standing army. Political issues repeatedly were decided by armed force, but there was no distinct class monopolizing military power.

There is another factor which, in the course of American history, tended to make class division less sharp and to favour fluctuations between the classes. This is the fact that America until the most recent times has been an expanding society—both geographically and industrially. In expanding societies, there is less social pressure than in societies which are not expanding. As long as there is expansion, proletarians seeking to improve

their condition have other opportunities than class struggle, inasmuch as the price of labour is high and there is no permanent reserve of labour.

All this may serve to explain why political thought in America developed along different lines from European political thought. But, it may be asked, are these differences not due to disappear as soon as class division in America becomes as rigid and sharp as in Europe? Is not the difference due to the lack of feudal tradition in America likely to become unimportant in an epoch when the '*bourgeois*' conception of life itself is threatened by new, 'proletarian,' and 'Fascist' philosophies?

These questions acquire added momentum from the fact that America now has ceased to be an expanding society. The end of expansion is indicated by the appearance of 'organic' unemployment—a fact which is bound profoundly to influence the thinking of the working class. Is America headed for class struggle? And will this class struggle go all the way to its logical conclusion, dictatorship?

One of the most profound political thinkers of nineteenth-century Europe, Alexis de Tocqueville, who foresaw the possibility of the degeneracy of democracy into dictatorship, in his great work on the United States discussed the emergence of dictatorship there as a very real eventuality. 'Ce qu'on peut prévoir dès à présent,' he says,<sup>1</sup> 'c'est qu'en sortant de la république, les Américains passeraient rapidement au despotisme, sans s'arrêter très-longtemps dans la monarchie.' And he showed that the democratic principle of popular election to the highest office in the State may tend so to increase the president's power that he would develop into a dictator: 'Le magistrat américain garderait sa puissance indéfinie en cessant d'être responsable, et il est impossible de dire où s'arrêterait alors la tyrannie.'<sup>2</sup>

Many commentators of present events in America are ready to admit that de Tocqueville's prophecy is on the point of being fulfilled. The New Deal has often been described as an attempt at dictatorship, and the present situation in America has frequently been compared with the dictatorial régimes existing in

<sup>1</sup> *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, 5th ed., Paris 1848, vol. ii, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 391.

Europe. The President, however, vigorously denied that he intended to introduce class rule, and the Supreme Court abrogated many of the powers conferred on him by emergency legislation. All important features of democratic rule, such as freedom of speech and of association, subsist in America without diminution. The capitalistic mode of production equally prevails.

Yet the question remains whether this is not merely a transitory state of things. Can democracy in America survive another crisis? Will the social forces accumulated in labour and other social organizations not break loose one day, destroying the country's democratic traditions?

Obviously a definite answer cannot at present be given to these questions. It is certain that the consciousness of the working class must undergo a profound change, and that permanent and widespread unemployment is bound to radicalize it. It is equally certain that, in our day, a regime can maintain itself only on condition that it is economically successful, and that, consequently, every economic crisis is bound to be followed by political changes. But it is by no means certain that the change must consist in class dictatorship, or the complete abandonment of deep-rooted political traditions. A long-established democracy has the advantage that it provides for changes of policy without changing the entire system of government. Thus, dictatorship is by no means the only possible outcome of another crisis.

So far as America is concerned, the ultimate advent of dictatorship appears doubtful for another reason. The social structure of all modern industrial nations is such that the proletariat is not facing one single undifferentiated 'capitalist' class, but that there are various 'middle-class' groups, especially farmers and white-collar men, besides proletarians and capitalists. In all countries where the farmers and other middle-class groups ally themselves to the capitalists, the advent of Fascism is likely. In America, however, the social instincts of farmers do not impel them to seek the friendship and support of capitalists. On the other hand, the farmers are equally unlikely to support a dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus there seems to exist a 'triangle situation' in

America—that is to say, one in which two rival groups compete to win the support of a third one. Such situations have always tended to favour the development and maintenance of democratic institutions. Consequently, on sociological grounds, there is reason to believe that American democracy will survive even another crisis, unless the crisis assumes such a form as to stultify political competition.

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## CHAPTER XI

# RUSSIA BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW

### *State—Economy—Man*

RUSSIA has been fashioned and guided for the last twenty years by Marxism. The spiritual roots of Marxism are European. Experiences drawn from the social history of France, the political economy of England, and the philosophy of Germany (especially Hegel's) have all left their impress on the Marxian system to which Lenin gave direct adherence. Socialism of the Marxian stamp has—in a quite specific and rigid shape—acquired universal significance *only* in Russia. There, whatever our judgment of the 'Russian experiment' may be, it has become a universal principle.

Our object in these pages is to outline the political and economic structures, and, as far as possible, the *new* form of man emerging in Russia. In asserting that the spiritual principle which has guided Russia for the last twenty years is of European origin, we seek from the outset to establish its continuity with that of the European political and social developments which we have, so far, presented in this book. It is, however, desirable, indeed essential, to characterize, if only under a few main headings, the peculiar historical circumstances of the Russian world with which Lenin and his associates were confronted in 1917.

### I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The original Slav population of Russia was, from the eighth century, subject to conquerors, mainly Norman. Kiev eventually became the capital of a Norman Grand Duke who managed to bring other Norman Russian princes under his sway. In about A.D. 1000 the Grand Duke Vladimir of Kiev became converted to Byzantine Catholicism. Norman influence on the early



Russian form of State, on its military organization, on jurisdiction, and on the spirit of commerce (Kiev by the eleventh century was one of the richest cities in Europe) calls to mind the state-building genius which the Normans manifested in Sicily, France, and England. In the thirteenth century, however, came the Mongolian invasion, which made Russia Asiatic, repressed her, and annihilated the Norman principle. The Mongol dominion strengthened and favoured already existent centralizing tendencies. During the reign of Ivan III (1462-1505) the Grand Dukedom of Muscovy succeeded in driving back the Mongols. Ivan took in marriage the niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium, and assumed the coat of arms of the Byzantine Empire. The insignia of the Byzantine Emperor were put in safe keeping in Moscow. In A.D. 1247 the Teutonic Knights were decisively defeated on the Neva by the Norman Russian armies, German colonization in the east was checked, and with the conquest of Great Novgorod, where the German Hansa had displaced the trade of Arabs and Normans, the eastern character of the Moscow dominion was established. It remained to be seen whether it would now turn towards Europe or not. After the fall of Constantinople a Russian monk addressed the following words to the Grand Duke of Moscow: 'Bear in mind, oh, bear in mind, pious Emperor, how that the whole of Christendom has become united under thy rule, for two Romes have fallen, but the third endures, and a fourth there will never be because thy Christian Empire will last for ever.' It was for this reason that Ivan IV, called 'The Terrible' (1533-1584), assumed the title of Tsar of All the Russias.

Ivan IV was the last Russian ruler of the Norman dynasty. By his harsh autocracy he secured the governmental centralization of Russia. At the same time he utilized European developments in business methods, handicrafts, and learning. The Greek Orthodox clergy who had migrated to Russia were, of course, absolutely inimical to any kind of European influence, and this factor determined the spiritual development of Russia for centuries. Even in 1917 when the Russian Revolution broke out there were in existence about a hundred thousand monasteries; not one survived the Revolution.

Michael Romanov (1613-45), a grandson of Ivan IV, founded a new dynasty which ruled Russia until 1917. Michael made mercantile capital serve in building up the economy of the State; he suppressed the feudal lords (Boyars) and consolidated the administration and economic organization of the Empire. He began, about 1618, to colonize Siberia, and also annexed the Ukraine to the Russian Empire. Thus in the seventeenth century the frontiers of the Russian Empire became more or less as they are to-day.

The ecclesiastical reforms of 1666 made the Church a bureaucratized official State Church and called forth, in consequence, the violent protests of the whole people which rose with the Cossacks and peasants, to be crushed, however, by the standing army. A reaction set in, supported by landlords, merchants, Tsarist officialism, and the clergy, who together kept in submission all the other classes of society, and this again left a mark on the sociological structure of Russia for centuries.

It was Peter I (1689-1725) who laid the foundations which caused Russia to rank as a great European power. He brought Esthonia, Livonia, and Swedish Ingria within the sphere of the Russian Empire. Reval, Riga, and Petersburg became, henceforth, important Russian seaports—gateways for the commerce of Russia with western Europe. Peter's European journey is well known. From it he took home a wealth of experience. A decisive part in Peter's reforms was played by the German element: till the advent of Bolshevism there was no comparable influence on Russia. 'It was the Germans,' writes Hans von Eckardt, 'who first created respect for the State, and brought a spirit of patriotism into the Russian army and official spheres.'<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Peter the nobility were drawn into the service of the State. Furthermore the trading class was economically benefited in that the State monopoly of trade and commerce was abolished, and two hundred factories, mines, and large workshops were established. But to the majority of the Russian people the reforms of Peter appeared as a corrupting influence, and the blame for it was laid on the hated foreign rulers. The alliance between the large landed interests, the official world, the world of

<sup>1</sup> *Russland*, Leipzig 1930, p. 66.

enterprise and commerce, and the Russian State Church weighed heavily on the patient and much exploited lower middle class and the peasantry. Yet, for all that, the connection with western European civilization was never to be lost.

During the reign of Peter's daughter, the Empress Elizabeth (1741-62), the spiritual influence of France became the ruling element at court. While, however, the Russian Academy at St Petersburg won a European reputation, the Russian peasant fell increasingly under the arbitrary power of the landowners. Dangerous conditions of tension arose which were to reach breaking-point under Elizabeth's successor, the Empress Catherine (1762-96). In the rising of Cossacks and peasants under Pugachev one thousand five hundred landowners were put to death by the insurrectionaries; although the result was to give the landowning class yet greater power, and Catherine ordered the execution of tens of thousands of insurrectionaries. The aftermath of these struggles continued right up to the days of the Bolshevik Revolution, for neither the Tsardom nor the peasantry could forget the blood which had then been shed. Catherine's connection with the western European enlightenment and with the idealist philosophy of Germany had no power to bring about an inward change in the Russian Tsardom.

Under Catherine's grandson, the Tsar Alexander I (1801-25), Russia became a supporter of European monarchical legitimism. The creator of the 'Holy Alliance' played a stronger part than any of his predecessors in the political relationships of the European powers. Napoleon's Russian campaign, completely checked by the burning of Moscow, drew the Russian people into a national unity. 'The Tsar,' as Eckardt truly observes, 'had become a European.'<sup>1</sup>

It was at the death of Alexander I that the first social and political revolutionary movement of importance began in Russia. This was the rising of the Decembrists, which had its origins in the secret societies of officers who had had western experiences, and were schooled in western ideas. Of the Decembrists' demands it will suffice to mention the following: the abolition of property rights over men and women; the introduction of trial by jury; the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 107.

organization of elections to effect a permanent representation of the people; freedom of the press; the abolition of the censorship. Thus the ideas of the French Revolution penetrated Russia also, and it was not in vain that the officers of Russia fought in the wars of Napoleon. The ideas of the Decembrists, however, could hardly find a response in the masses of the people, the majority of whom still lived in a dull, depressed, and primitive condition—'dead souls,' as Gogol called them.

The rebellion of the Decembrists had, none the less, profound effects. The revolutionary movements of the two succeeding generations—Liberalism, Panslavism, Nihilism, the Narodniki with their religio-political notions—all these were influenced by the ideas of the Decembrists. Not Gogol alone but also Pushkin (1799-1837) was in sympathy with them, and the great celebrations with which the Soviet Government observed in 1937 the hundredth anniversary of the death of Pushkin is proof of their profound influence.

The new national sentiment in Russia adversely criticized the authority of the State and stigmatized the lack of all humane feeling and imagination on the part of the ruling classes. It was a criticism, however, that was still remote from Socialism. Sons of the middle classes and of impoverished landowners reinforced the Decembrists' ranks and there emerged that class of Russian intelligentsia which, up to the time of Lenin and those who shared his views, remained the bearer of the Russian revolutionary idea. With the beginning of the nineteenth century there appeared a Russian mode of thought adjusted, on the broadest basis, to the substance of European thought. But with this forward movement towards the storehouse of western European ideas there went a simultaneous backward movement to Russian human nature, which realized mature poetical form in Gogol's striving for the intensification and mystical purification of this nature.

Nicholas I (1825-55) had to fight for his throne against the rebels. The Decembrist rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed, and five years later (1830) the Polish insurrection was, in a like manner, savagely put down. The Russian Tsar had become the guardian of European reaction. Under Nicholas I a comprehen-

sive codification of law was undertaken, and hand in hand with this procedure went the organization of a State police system to be under the Tsar's own supervision. 'This system,' Eckardt remarks, 'was elaborated and perfected in the course of decades.' During the Crimean War, which went ill for Russia, the Tsar died, and his successor, Alexander II (1855-81), was immediately faced with the task of settling the results of this unfortunate struggle. The Emancipation of the Peasants which Alexander II set on foot (by an Act of 1861) led during its first years to two thousand local revolts of the peasantry which had to be put down by force of arms. In the Russo-Polish provinces the new law was a threat to the existence of the large estates, and in the conflicts which blazed up a hundred thousand Poles were either massacred or transported to Siberia. The final results of Alexander II's agrarian reforms may be summarized as follows: with the aid of the new system of land-tenure there arose a prosperous Russian peasant class which included a bare 20 per cent of the total peasantry; another 30 per cent could just manage to earn a living; while 50 per cent sank down into a class of pauperized and propertyless toilers on the land. The emancipation of the peasants was also a catastrophe for the nobility and the large estates. Industry, likewise, sustained, in the first instance, an injury, for hitherto it had had workers at its disposal on a footing of bond-service. The retrograde move in industry—in 1865 there were in Russia only 381,000 factory hands out of a total population of more than 60,000,000—was, however, swiftly followed by recovery.

With the judicial system of 1864 a rule of law was to some extent created, but it could, of course, at any time that it was thought necessary, be 'corrected' in an absolutist sense by the Administration. In the same year a law was promulgated concerning the provinces and districts, intended to bring the village, the township, the district, and the province under a common conception of administration; and that, indeed, was how it actually tended to work. Representatives of the intelligentsia, young people from the universities, men of letters, and Government officials were excluded by franchise qualifications from official representation in the State Duma or in

the Zemstvos. Finally, compulsory military service was introduced in 1874.

All these reforms, however, could not in any way resolve contradictions which were becoming ever more acute between the Tsarist system and the groups of peasants and of industrial workers, which were now gradually taking political form. The so-called Narodniki Party (Awakeners of the People) by 1880 already numbered ten thousand members. Nevertheless, a true revolutionary mass-basis could not be said to exist. The youth of Russia wore itself out in a hopeless struggle against the brutality of the regime until, in 1880, Alexander II, too, lost his life at the hands of a group of terrorists.

During this very period, however, Dostoevsky painted a consummate picture of Russian human nature which produced the profoundest impression in Europe. Nietzsche said of Dostoevsky that he was the only psychologist who was able to teach him anything. According to Dostoevsky the Russian presents a new type of man—the man of universal human culture. He absorbs the culture of the west and combines the subjectivity of that culture with the Russian spirit of meek love: 'Truth is not outside thyself, but within thyself: seek and find thyself in thyself: subject thyself to thyself: possess thyself of thyself, and thou wilt behold truth. . . . When thou hast conquered thyself, when thou, of thine own self, shalt be humbled, thou shalt be free in a measure which thou hast never conceived. And thou wilt begin the great work and wilt also give freedom to others, and thou wilt know happiness, for thy life will receive abundance and thou wilt at length come to understand thy people and its sacred truth.' Such a portrait of the Russian character needs, of course, other utterances to complete and correct it. Young Maxim Gorki, one of the first to picture poetically the toilsome world of the Russian proletariat and of the exploited peasantry, turned expressly against what is called Russian humility and wrote: 'The Russian people has an innate inclination towards anarchy. It is passive, but it is cruel. The much-praised kindness of its soul is a Karamozovian sentimentality and is frighteningly irresponsive to humanity and true culture.' Nietzsche, with his deep insight into the changes of western culture, wrote: 'The incursion of the

Russians into culture—a magnificent aim—nearness to barbarism—the awakening of the arts—the magnanimity of Youth, fantastic craziness, and an actual strength of will.’

Dostoevsky’s and Tolstoi’s works lacked any inkling of that positive and constructive solution of the social problems of Russia which became an increasingly urgent necessity. It was Marx and Engels, elder masters of west European Socialism, who trained the young Socialists of Russia in the eighties. The effects of this schooling were seen in the revolution of 1905. The revolutionary movement had now become a movement of the *masses*. ‘Moujik and worker, led and liberated by the new, western, proletarian idea, destroyed the traditions of Russian Liberalism, of westernism, of Panslavism, of the national movement of the Narodniki—of those very ideas, in fact, which western Europe regarded as typically Russian, namely, Russian religiousness and belief in the goodness of human nature’ (*vide* Eckardt). This mass movement should not, of course, be attributed solely to the superiority of Marxist leadership, for the growing industrialization of Russia contributed its part towards it. Towns such as Vilna, Kiev, Odessa, Riga, Warsaw, Lodz, etc., at that time trebled the number of their inhabitants.

The future Bolshevik Party was then already leading its first formations successfully into the field, and the twenty-eight-year-old Trotsky was president of the Petersburg Soviet of Workers. As a result of the General Strike in October 1905 the Constitution was won. But beyond that the revolutionary movement could not proceed. What remained to the Russians was, in Max Weber’s happy phrase, a ‘sham constitutionalism.’

Western Europe, however, misunderstanding the signs of the times, placed confidence in the constitutional development of Russia. One thousand three hundred and seventy-nine joint-stock companies sprang up between 1909 and 1913, in which German, French, English, and Belgian capital had a share. The State and the harsh Russian capitalist exploiters joined together in a common front. The peasantry were to be even more rigorously subjected to the State, and to this end the Russian peasant commune, the *Mir*, was abolished. It must, however, be noted here that from 1906 until the outbreak of the Revolution in 1917

only 20 per cent of the peasants belonging to the *Mir*<sup>1</sup> availed themselves of the new law. The village proletariat and the working classes of the towns were shut out from the community of the nation, and that, of course, meant the formation of an 'opposition front' to the State, the middle class, and the nobility. Russian capitalism was essentially colonial capitalism; it was 'a matter of profit-making without developmental foresight, and it stood in the way even of its own future productivity' (*vide* Eckhardt). This Russian capitalism failed to meet the organizational and administrative requirements of the World War.

March 1917 saw the collapse of the Tsarist Empire and the Russian Revolution set out upon its historic march. In a locked railway carriage, under the protection of the German General Staff, Lenin and twenty-eight comrades reached St Petersburg early in April 1917. Trotsky, president of the St Petersburg Soviet of Workers in 1905, followed them towards the end of April. The Bolshevik programme proclaimed that 'the Russian Revolution is to be the prologue of world revolution.'

It is superfluous to describe here the sequence of events from March to November 1917. In his monumental work, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky has given a full description of the social forces at work in that epoch. Under the leadership of Lenin the Bolshevik Party seized political power in Russia on 7th November 1917, and a new chapter was opened in the history of Russia and, indeed, of the whole western world.

## 2. BOLSHEVISM: STATE AND PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

Lenin had spent twenty years in preparing a spiritual and organizational basis for the Bolshevik revolution, and when, together with his friends, he seized power the Bolshevik programme was already worked out in its main features. In 1916 and 1917 Lenin wrote two books—*Imperialism: the Last Stage of Capitalism* and *The State and Revolution*. The latter work is a

<sup>1</sup> The *Mir* was created in the sixteenth century in connection with the joint and several liabilities of the peasants to taxation; in no case was it, as is frequently said, especially by Marxists, a 'primitive form' of economic organization of the Russian peasants.



statement of the principles of the Marxist doctrine of the State, and is based on the works of Marx and Engels in so far as these writers analysed the revolutionary experiences of the nineteenth century. Lenin intentionally leaves out of account all the 'evolutionary' tendencies of the Marxist doctrine of the State. He wished to add a further analysis of post-Marxian revolutionary occurrences in Russia, but the course of the Revolution itself interrupted him while he was engaged on this work, so that in a postscript of the first edition, published in Petrograd in November 1917, he explained that 'the writing of the second part of the pamphlet ["The Experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917"] will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is pleasanter and more useful to go through "the experience of revolution" than to write about it.'<sup>1</sup>

The work was, in fact, never continued. But *The State and Revolution* is adequate even in its present form to make clear to us the Bolshevik doctrine of the State.

For Lenin the State is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonism. 'It is,' as Lenin puts it in a quotation from Engels, 'a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is an admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms, which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power *apparently* [our italics] standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict and keeping it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the State.'<sup>2</sup> Even the contemporary representative State, the so-called *bourgeois* State, is, according to Lenin, an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the capitalists who rule with it the majority of the population. 'The omnipotence of "wealth" is thus more secure in a democratic republic, since it does not depend on the faulty political shell of capitalism.

<sup>1</sup> Quotation taken from *Selected Works of Lenin*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, vol. vii, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Selected Works of Lenin*, vol. vii, p. 8.

A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and therefore, once capital has gained control . . . it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change, either of persons, or institutions, or of parties in the *bourgeois*-democratic republic can shake it. We must also note that Engels very definitely calls universal suffrage an instrument of *bourgeois* rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously summing up the long experience of German Social Democracy, is "an index of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the modern State." ' <sup>1</sup> Hence it can be understood that Lenin could never agree to a 'democratic' course such as was adopted by Kerenski in the Russian March Revolution, but stood for an unconditional forward drive of the social revolution.

The first step of a Socialist revolution could be only the complete destruction of the State machine. Here again Lenin finds support in the Marx-Engels analyses based on the events of the Paris Commune of 1871. In their new preface to the *Communist Manifesto* dated 24th July 1872 Marx and Engels wrote: 'One thing in particular was proved by the Commune, viz. "that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the existing State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." ' <sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact the Paris Commune ordained in its first decrees the suppression of the standing army and as a substitute for it the arming of the people, and that all persons holding office should be subject absolutely to election and recall. These measures drew forth the following comment from Lenin: 'Thus the Commune appears to have substituted "only" fuller democracy for the smashed State machine: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies the very important substitution of one type of institution for others of a fundamentally different order. This is a case of "quantity becoming transformed into quality" [Lenin adopts here from Hegelian logic a well-known scheme of evolution]: democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is generally conceivable, is transformed from *bourgeois* democracy into proletarian democracy; from the State (i.e. a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer really a

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

State. It is still necessary to suppress the *bourgeoisie* and crush its resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. But the organ of suppression is now the majority of the population, and not the minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage-slavery. And since the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression *is no longer necessary*. In this sense the State *begins to wither away* [Lenin's italics]. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, heads of the standing army) the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of State power devolve upon the people generally, the less need is there for the existence of this power.' <sup>1</sup> This is the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, by which is meant expressly the *vanguard* of the coming Socialist order of society.

The theory of the withering away of the State is an essential doctrinal part of the Marxist-Bolshevik theory. Even Stalin declared in a remarkable speech at the Communist Party Congress of July 1930: 'We stand for the demise of the State. At the same time we are for strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the strongest and most energetic power in all states that have existed hitherto. The maximum development of the power of the State for the purpose of preparing the conditions for the demise of the State—such is the Marxist formula. Is that an "inconsistency"? Yes, it is an "inconsistency." But it is a living inconsistency which fully and completely reflects the logic of Marxism.' We must endeavour to show the secret of this irreconcilability.

The conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat scarcely calls for more detailed exposition. That it makes use of a strong 'State' is evident and is demonstrated by the history of the Russian Revolution up to the present day. The democratic character of this dictatorship will be understood, at least in theory, when we understand the proletarian dictatorship as an educational dictatorship. The Bolshevik party is exercising dictatorship 'in the interests' of the majority. But the majority needs to be educated.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 40-1.

to know what its interests are. This pedagogic aspect of the proletarian dictatorship had already been clearly expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*, which says that 'they [the Communists] being, as far as theory is concerned, in advance of the general mass of the proletariat, have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement and how to foresee its course and its general results.'<sup>1</sup>

But what is the meaning of the theory of the withering away of the State? To the elucidation of this question Lenin devotes very careful attention. In *The State and Revolution* he writes: 'It is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the State means also the abolition of democracy; that the withering away of the State means the withering away of democracy. At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed someone may even begin to fear that we are expecting the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be respected, for is not democracy the recognition of this principle? No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognizes the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organization for the systematic use of *violence* [all these italics are Lenin's] by one class against the other. . . . We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the State, i.e. all organized and systematic violence, all use of violence against man in general. We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. But in striving for Socialism we are convinced that it will develop into Communism and, hence, that the need for violence against people in general, the need for the *subjection* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish, since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without force* and *without subordination*.'<sup>2</sup> Yet even the above sentences do not contain a satisfactory exposition of the process of 'the withering away of the State.' One thing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. D. Ryazanoff, Lawrence & Wishart, London, Part I, sect. ii, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Lenin's Selected Works*, Lawrence & Wishart, vol. vii, p. 75.

only is made clear, namely that Lenin's conception of the State finally rests on a profound faith in human *goodness*; for it is only when we are convinced of man's fundamental goodness that a State organization in the sense of a coercive apparatus for keeping order in social life can be, even conceivably, unnecessary. It is at this point, however, that the Marxist-Leninist theory of the State makes contact with those traditions of political thought in the west which have been formulated and reformulated from the days of the Stoa and of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In this sense we may affirm that the Bolshevik doctrine of the State has European principles for its foundation, though up to the present there seems to be no warrant for declaring that the Russians have come a step nearer to their goal.

Let us follow Lenin further in examining the economic foundations of this doctrine of the 'withering away' of the State. It is not a thing which happens overnight—not even within the space of twenty years, a period which, when seen from the viewpoint of world history, may be regarded as 'overnight.' Lenin sees perfectly clearly that the process of the withering away of the State is one of *long duration*. In the work of building up a Socialist society, at the conclusion of which the State, as we know it now, ceases to be necessary, Lenin distinguishes—again in strictest accord with the economic and sociological assertions found in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*—two phases. During the first phase of the transition from the dictatorship of the proletariat to a Communist society we cannot achieve justice and equality. (Here again we make contact with those basic political and social ideas of central Europe whose survival power is shown by the fact that they determined even the ideals of State and society held by Bolshevism.) 'In demolishing Lassalle's confused petty-bourgeois phrases about "equality" and "justice" in general,' Lenin writes, 'Marx explains the course of development of Communist society, which is compelled at first to abolish *only* that "injustice" by which the means of production have been seized by private individuals, and *cannot* at once abolish that other injustice by which articles of consumption are distributed "according to the amount of work performed" (and not according to needs).'

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 85.

These are, no doubt, defects which the dictatorship of the proletariat has to face from the very beginning. Even Marx himself saw that most definitely. 'But these defects are inevitable,' he wrote, 'in that first phase of Communist society when it has but just emerged, after prolonged birthpangs, from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined.'<sup>1</sup> In the work referred to Marx gives, however, a basic conception of the second phase of Communist society which Lenin, too, accepts without reservation. 'In a higher phase of Communist society, when the servile subordination of individuals under division of labour and therewith the antithesis between mental and physical labour has vanished; when labour has become not merely the means of livelihood, but the primary necessity of life; when productive powers have also increased with the all-round development of the individual and the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—then alone can the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* right be fully superseded and society inscribe upon its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!'<sup>2</sup> This phase, supposing it were realized, would, in very deed, be the kingdom of free and equal men! Lenin adds a word of caution to Marx's elucidation of principle: 'By what stages, by what practical measures, humanity will proceed to this higher aim we do not and cannot know.' It is important to note, however, that Lenin speaks of 'stages of humanity,' and that he envisages a world-revolutionary perspective. But he expressly declares that capitalism has created the preliminary requirements for literally every one to take part in the administration of the State in its process of withering away. 'Among these preliminary requirements are general education, already achieved in most of the advanced capitalist countries, and the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, and socialized apparatus of the post office, the railways, the big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc. etc.'<sup>3</sup> After the overthrow of the capitalists and the Government officials, the armed workers—the whole armed population—is to take *control* of production and distribution, and to *keep account* of labour and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 86.<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 87.<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 92.

its products. Lenin adds in brackets: 'The question of control and accountancy must not be confused with the question of scientifically educated staffs of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working to-day in obedience to the capitalists; they will work even better to-morrow in obedience to the armed workers.' A final sentence of Lenin's may be given at the conclusion of these considerations: 'The accountancy and control necessary for this have been so utterly *simplified* [Lenin's italics] by capitalism that they have been reduced to extraordinarily easy operations of checking, recording, and issuing receipts, such as any one who can read and write, and who knows the first four rules of arithmetic, can perform.'<sup>1</sup> Lenin himself may well have laughed at this statement, when, after the termination of the militant phase of Communism, he weighed in his mind his first measures of economic planning! In a speech at that time did he not himself ask of his Bolsheviks technical knowledge of all kinds, for which a trustworthy Communist outlook could by no means suffice? Obviously, the Bolshevik regime would have been spared much trouble if its leader had possessed a more adequate grasp of the peculiar art of capitalist and civil service efficiency.

Want of such insight, however, proved no obstacle to Lenin's seizure of power. Indeed, the Bolsheviks regarded the Russian Revolution primarily as a prelude to world revolution. Such an expectation was in harmony with the classical doctrine of Marx and Engels. In a later preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, dated January 1882, we read: 'The *Communist Manifesto* was a proclamation in which the inevitable disappearance of present-day *bourgeois* property relations was heralded. In Russia, alongside the capitalist system (which is growing up with feverish speed) and the *bourgeois* landowning system (which is in its early stages of development), more than half the land is owned in common by the peasantry. The question we have to answer is: Will the Russian peasant communes—a primitive [!] form of communal ownership of land which is already on the down grade—become transformed into the superior form of Communist ownership of land, or will they have to pass through the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-3.

same process of decay we have witnessed in the course of the historical evolution of the west? There is only one possible answer to this question. If the Russian Revolution sounds the signal for a workers' revolution in the west, *so that each becomes the complement of the other* [our italics], then the preliminary form of communal ownership of land in Russia may serve as the starting point for a Communist course of development.' <sup>1</sup> The signal was, of course, given by Russia, but the western nations did not develop the social-revolutionary action which theory demanded of them. The outcome of the 'revolution' in Germany was a belated middle-class democracy. Nevertheless the influence of the working class in Germany during the years of belligerent Russian Communism was powerful enough to prevent Russia being jeopardized at least from that quarter. Lenin at once saw that world revolution was not proceeding according to programme. In May 1918 he declared: 'For us it is easy to begin a revolution, but harder to continue it. In the west it is hard to begin a revolution, but it will be easier to continue it.' He repeated this same line of thought on the 27th of April 1920: 'For Russia . . . it was easy to begin the Socialist revolution, but to continue it, and carry it through to the end, will be harder for Russia than for the European countries. I found it necessary to point this out at the beginning of 1918, and two years' experience since then have fully confirmed this judgment.' These last two quotations are taken from Appendix II of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* under the title of 'Socialism in a Separate Country,' in which Trotsky tries (as we think rather pointlessly) to argue that Stalin's theory of Socialism in a *separate* country cannot be reconciled with Lenin's theory of the State. The few passages we have quoted suffice to show that Lenin came to see with increasing lucidity the differences of sociological structure between the west and Russia. From such recognition to the theory of Socialism in a separate country is but a single step which the realist Stalin has rightly dared to take.

The theory of 'Socialism in a separate country' has had less effect on Bolshevism's theory of the State than on the incorporation

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, ed. D. Ryazanoff, pp. 264-5.



of Russian Socialism into the course of world history. It is undoubtedly true that Marxist theory was originally world-revolutionary in its design. The cry, 'Proletarians of all lands, unite!' was the programme of a Socialist *Imperium Mundi*. It is the Stoic idea of a world kingdom in a twentieth-century form—the only form of organization for a kingdom of the free and equal.

The idea of a Socialist *Imperium Mundi* is in no sense annulled by the theory of Socialism in a separate country, which is merely a compulsory recognition that there are various paths to Socialism. The era of international Socialism is ended. Since the World War we have passed into an era of Socialisms which vary in accordance with their countries; but this does not exclude these national Socialisms from eventually working together in some distant future.

### 3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE BOLSHEVIST REGIME

We must next consider how far the political rule of the Bolsheviks has succeeded in securing an economic basis for its power. Hitherto their gigantic experiment in Socialist economy has been carried through by means of two great Five Year Plans. (Economic analyses of the periods of belligerent Communism and of the New Economic Policy may be left here unexamined, since we are presenting not a history of the Russian Revolution, but rather a structural analysis of its political and social achievements.) For an exposition of the economic structure of Russian planning, the example of the first Five Year Plan, begun in 1927, will prove sufficient. In the plans the entire economy of Russia is subordinated to a homogeneous scheme. The Communist Party Congress—the supreme organ of the Bolshevik Party—determines the trend of the plan whose scientific and economic working out devolves upon the Central Planning Commission in Moscow. The lower units, such as single factories, work out their plans which are transmitted to higher units, and thence to the Central Plan Department for examination and possibly for correction. The plans provide for the quan-

ties of commodities to be manufactured and for costs at all the stages of production. In Russian economy the system of cost and price is adhered to in principle. It may be taken, to-day, as settled that apart from such a system, a complicated State economy cannot, in general, be made to function. The surplus profits in industrial undertakings are deposited in a State Investment Bank, which grants advances for new investments. In addition to this system of savings there may be workers' private savings which can, moreover, be 'stimulated' through State loans. No possible accumulation of such private savings can of itself affect the structure of Socialist economy, for the acquisition of the means of production with a view to the exploitation of others is excluded. The sole authority for disposing of these means of production is the State itself.

The problem of the labour market presents greater difficulties. In the first instance it is solved, as in capitalist countries, voluntarily, or by the law of supply and demand. But since in this connection serious friction occurred, the State executive interposed with various measures, going even as far as industrial conscription. Differentiation in wages had likewise to be employed. This has been called 'Socialist competition,' but this is merely a euphemistic expression for a thing well known in the capitalist economy.

The functioning of agrarian planning in Russian economy was yet more complicated. There are three forms of agricultural production. First there is that of the non-collectivized peasant who produces for his own maintenance and sells his surplus, if any, in the market. The second form of agricultural production is that of the collectivized peasants—the *kollebsi*. In the period of transition, that is during the period when collectivization was being effected, the greatest difficulties arose in this branch of agriculture. The peasants for the most part fought against incorporation into the collective farm; theirs was not merely a passive resistance, but an active opposition to the State executive. This opposition was, however, successfully broken, and to-day (1938) the collectivization of the peasants may be regarded as securely established. So distinguished an expert on Russian planning as Barbara Wootton writes in this connection: 'Indeed,

certain agricultural decrees of 1932 and 1933 clearly indicate that, however valuable the collectives may be as centres of propaganda, in which a new ideology may be implanted in the minds of the country folk, the Soviet authorities are recognizing the extent to which they are governed by the orthodox price mechanism. Under these decrees it is recorded that the old quotas, which had to be delivered to the authorities at fixed prices, have been abolished in the case of meat, milk, and later, grain; and a tax, fixed *in advance* [our italics] substituted. After paying the tax in full, both the individual peasant and the collective are to sell their produce on the best terms that they can in the open market; but, in accordance with the policy of encouraging the collectives, the tax falls more lightly on them than on the individual farmers.<sup>1</sup> Finally, a third form of agricultural production is represented by State farms, the *sovkhozi*. These are under an Agricultural Trust, and are directed and controlled upon the same principles as the industrial units.

A further word is perhaps required concerning the organization of Russian trade. Private trading was abolished in the course of operation of the first Five Year Plan. At the present time, apart from the foreign trade monopoly, which is in the hands of the State, there are three home trading groups—State trade, co-operative trading, and collective farms (*kollekhosi*) trade.<sup>2</sup>

Such is in rough outline the form of Bolshevik economic structure. No one, of course, would claim that Russia's economic planning is proceeding perfectly smoothly and without friction. Not even the Bolsheviks themselves say this. But it may be said that the Russian experiment has on the whole been a success, and that as an example it is influencing and will continue to influence the workers of every country.

That there are grounds for friction and difficulty is obvious. Russia could not construct its economy by observing merely economic standards. On the one hand, in the east, there is the menace of Japan; and on the other, in the west, National Socialism is threatening the very existence of the Soviet Union. There is much truth in the talk about Russia as a 'besieged

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Plan or no Plan*, London 1934, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Handbook of the U.S.S.R.*, London 1936, pp. 239 ff.

fortress.' Consequently the Bolshevik rulers had to accomplish their economic reconstruction partly—indeed very largely—in accordance with military requirements. Any just and unprejudiced consideration of the Russian economic plan must admit the necessity for the first and second Five Year Plans being drawn up with a view primarily to the extension of industries concerned with the means of production, while consumption commodities, often urgently needed, were forced to take the second place. Accordingly the system of costs and prices, indispensable in Socialist economic planning, could not always be maintained and had sometimes to be relinquished. Thus Russian gold production, for example, which to-day holds second place in the world's output, was uneconomically carried on if measured by west European capitalist standards. But a unified economic system on the Russian scale of magnitude has possibilities of give and take which capitalist economy, whose means of production are in private hands, does not possess. Even a paper like *The Times*, in an article in its issue of 5th July 1937, had to admit: 'The central and fundamental fact about contemporary Russia is that the country is in the throes of an industrial revolution comparable with that which transformed western Europe a hundred years ago. It is officially claimed that the industrial production of the present territory of the Soviet Union is now more than seven times, the agricultural one and a half times, and the national income four times what they were before the War. The number of workers engaged in industry has risen from some eight million fifteen years ago to more than twenty-five million to-day, and well over a third of the population are now dependent on industry.' It remains to inquire how this economic development has acted and does act on the character of the individual Russian. This is a question fraught with very great difficulties. History knows no example of a similarly rapid revolutionizing of economic life. How far has this revolutionary process modified the nature of the individual Russian?

This at least is certain—the *form* of political authority has remained unchanged in the hands of the Bolshevik Party. Even the new Constitution of the Soviet Union can scarcely alter the political organization of authority—at least within living

anticipation. For the new Constitution expressly postulates that candidates for the new representation of the people, to be elected by a universal and secret ballot, must be nominated by the Communist Party. Russia is still living in the era of revolutionary dictatorship; but if this is actually less a dictatorship of the proletariat than a dictatorship of Stalin we hold that it is, rightly understood, a dictatorship in the interests of the proletariat and of *Russian* Socialism, that is, of Socialism in a particular nation. In our judgment we have here something profoundly different from the Fascist forms of dictatorship. Fascist dictatorships have not dared to encroach on private ownership of the means of production, even if they have been able to limit its social effects. The Fascist dictator has to hold the balance between working-class interests and the interests of the capitalists. He can tip the scales as circumstances dictate, now this way, now that way. But he is not able to harmonize the conflicting elements, for these are *per se* antagonistic. Hence the most serious misapprehensions follow when the Bolshevik and the Fascist dictatorships—*qua* dictatorships—are regarded as identical. The Bolshevik dictatorship may in principle, when it has finished Socialist construction, attain to a Socialist society of 'the free and equal,' but such a goal is, in principle, beyond the attainment of Fascism.

No careful observer of Russian development will have failed to see that in the process of economic and political stabilization new social strata have sprung up, the significance of which, as regards the eventual social structure, it is difficult to estimate. There are the strata of the privileged officials of State and of all kinds of professional men whom *The Times* article, already quoted, describes in the following manner: 'The Russian industrial revolution has produced results recognizably similar to those of the western industrial revolution a century ago. It has brought into power in Russia, as it did in the west, not the proletariat which provides the muscles and sinews of industrial production, but a new social stratum, appropriately defined as a "middle class," which supplies that production with brains and capital. Nor does it matter that in Russia the owner of the brains is a bureaucrat, and the owner of the capital the State itself. A bureaucrat is a human being, and a State (just like a limited

liability company or a bank) is composed of human beings; these human beings have their economic needs and ambitions and create their social tradition. The first instinct of the new Russian bureaucrat—the capitalist and the black-coated worker of the industrial revolution—is to achieve a standard of living which raises him above the proletarian rank and file. He wants better food and lodging, better clothes for his wife, better seats at the theatre, the possibility of choosing his own doctor . . . and a thousand other benefits and privileges which in Russia, as elsewhere, are the prerogative of the comfortably off; and, having these privileges, he wants an efficient State machine, with an efficient army and police, to secure him in the possession of them. All these things the new Russian middle class, composed mainly of officials, engineers, managers, clerks, Red Army officers, and professional men of all kinds, is slowly but surely acquiring.'

This, to be sure, is a rather alarming picture, and one with which all unprejudiced observers who in the last few years have visited the Soviet Union and had a chance of studying it thoroughly must agree. Yet the description needs supplementing by a very important proviso which the writer of *The Times* article felt that he owed his readers. 'But in considering the status of this new *bourgeoisie*, the backbone and principle beneficiary of the Soviet régime, one important reservation must be made. *Classes in the Soviet Union have not yet crystallized, and may never crystallize* [our italics], as they did after the industrial revolution in western Europe. The proletarian need not remain a proletarian or the peasant a peasant. Already the "Stakhanovite" worker may, by hewing a super-human tonnage of coal or pulling an incredible number of beets per hour, earn five or fifteen times the wages of his fellows and climb into the well-to-do class. The son of the coal-heaver has as good a chance as the son of a clerk or a commissar of finding his way into the privileged circle. "La carrière est ouverte aux talents" is the watchword of Soviet Russia.' Observations of this character cannot be left unheeded. Granted that talent, endowment, ambition, and Socialist enthusiasm do make possible the chances of an advance in life, the question still remains whether this new stratum of society, which according to the above

description is beginning to crystallize, is producing social standards in harmony with the idealist aims of the Bolshevik State or whether the rising group has managed to get such new standards enforced. There has not been a sufficient lapse of time to enable us to form a reliable judgment on this question. It requires many generations to develop a new social morality. There are, for all that, certain recognizable tendencies to which we shall now refer.

#### 4. THE NEW MAN?

With the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution, a sexual libertinism set in, of which such a book as *The Way of Love*, by the well-known Soviet writer, Alexandra Kollontai, is symptomatic. In that book a young Communist is pictured as explaining to her mother, who is of the pre-War liberal generation, the following position: 'So long as we are fond of one another, we live together. When that is no longer true we part. No one loses anything by it. . . . Naturally, it isn't a nice thing if you have to interrupt your job for two or three weeks for the sake of an abortion. But that's my own fault. I shall know how to take care of myself better in the future.' A view such as this is understandable and explicable only when we remember how critical was the state of things when Communism, sword in hand, was fighting for its very existence. Even at that time Lenin took a definite stand against such sexual libertinism. It is significant that in 1920 he wrote thus to Clara Zetkin: 'The changed attitude of young people to the problems of sex is naturally "a question of principle" and depends upon a theory. Some talk of their attitude as being "revolutionary" and "Communist." They sincerely believe this to be the case. But this does not impress me, as an old man, at all. Although I am by no means an austere ascetic this so-called "new sexual life" of young people, and sometimes of older people also, seems to me often enough to be a merely *bourgeois* business, an extension of the *bourgeois* brothel. It has nothing whatever to do with freedom of love as we Communists understand it. You know, of course, the notorious theory that in Communist society the gratification of sexual passion is . . . as simple and common-

place an act as drinking a glass of water. This "glass of water" theory has made our young people totally and utterly crazy. It has been the doom of many a young lad and lass. Those who support it say they are Marxist. Thank you! But Marxism it is not. Things are not quite so simple as that. It is not merely something natural to us that is fulfilled in the sexual life, but also something which we have acquired *through culture* [our italics], however lofty or low that may be. Thirst must, of course, be satisfied. But is there a normal man in normal circumstances who would lie down in the mud and drink from a puddle? Or, say, from a tumbler the rim of which many lips have made greasy? And the fact which is of greatest importance is the social aspect of the problem. The drinking of water is an individual act. In love, on the other hand, two beings are involved. And a third, a new life, may appear. It is just here, in this fact, that the interests of society are involved. There is the duty to the community. . . . The revolution requires concentration, an increase of strength. Both from the masses and from individuals. It cannot tolerate such orgies as are normal to the heroes and heroines of d'Annunzio. Sexual licentiousness belongs to the *bourgeois* world. It is an evidence of decay. But the proletariat is a rising class. It has no need of intoxicants as narcotics or as stimulants. Self-control, self-discipline, is not slavery. No! even in love it is not that.<sup>1</sup> The progress of the Bolshevik Revolution has confirmed the principles which Lenin here expounds. The Russian law concerning marriage, when compared with the first Bolshevik Code, has been made strikingly more strict. Most notable is the very great stress which is laid on parental responsibility towards children. In the *Pravda* of 4th March 1935 we read: 'A Communist is judged by his output in the workshop, but also by the way he educates his children. If he educates them well he is a good Communist, if he educates them badly he is a bad one.' The Soviet Government recognizes that a State cannot exist apart from a strong family unit. Hence collectivist experimentation in the sphere of State education has been substantially reduced. Mehnert in his very important book,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Klaus Mehnert, *Love in Soviet Russia*, trans. M. Davidson, London 1933, pp. 207 ff.



*Youth in Soviet Russia* (1933), points with emphasis to the fact that the forced collectivist tendency of Youth Communes has given rise to its very antithesis and has laid bare fundamental principles of man's nature. Mehnert, who first noticed this tendency, gives the following sketches from the diary of such a Youth Commune: 'I am tired and want to live alone. I suffer from depressions and have had my fill of collectivism. At the high school there is a Collective. At home there is a Collective. I want to be alone.' Or, again: 'Of the eleven communards five have now married. But since housing conditions had not altered, the separation into girls' and men's bedrooms had to remain as before. This has a most unhappy effect on the relationships of the young couples. In a letter to her husband Tanya writes in despair: "I want to enjoy a happiness of my own, a little, simple, legitimate happiness. I long for some quiet corner with yourself alone, just to be together with you, not to have to hide ourselves from others, to feel a fuller, freer, more joyous intercourse. Cannot the Commune understand that this is *a human necessity?*"' [our italics].<sup>1</sup> Mehnert, who lived in Russia till 1936, has assured us that in the meantime tendencies like these have become stronger still.

This new discovery of human individuality, which does not in any way contemplate the abandonment of social obligations, must be set side by side with another phenomenon. Every one will remember the attitude of sheer materialism which appeared in no equivocal sense in the writings of Lenin and in the practice of the Bolsheviks. Lenin's slogan, 'Religion is opium for the people,' originates in this materialism. (It should be remembered that the Russian clergy played a powerful role in the Tsarist system, and must, therefore, be held largely accountable for the appeal of Bolshevik atheism.) But it seems that in this connection also significant changes are in store. In her book *Soviet Man—Now*, Helen Iswolski has brought into relief the new religious tendencies which are beginning to manifest themselves in the Bolshevik State. All this coincides with the Soviet Government's call for renewed appreciation of Russian history and of national traditions.

This trend towards a new individualization of the Russian

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 178.

character had already come to our notice in a book entitled *The Diary of a Communist Undergraduate* (Kostya Riabtsev). A remarkable situation is presented in this diary. The father of the student Kostya lies on his deathbed. Kostya asks his friend what he thinks about death. The friend answers: 'About death? In the first place I have no intention of dying—something is sure to be invented to make it impossible. But if I die—well, I 'll just die.' Kostya, however, enters the following note in his diary: 'But it's quite a different thing when someone you are fond of is dying—take father, for instance. You can't very well stand by his bedside and argue that he is merely matter that will dissolve according to such and such a process.' Loneliness, love, death, direct man's thoughts to what is beyond the materialist world of technical civilization. A new culture with a new ethic and new human standards is dawning. The Soviet Government will have to pay serious heed to the silent growth of these new forces.

No one, however, can at this moment say whether the new social stratum which has undoubtedly formed in Bolshevik Russia within the last twenty years as the predominant stratum, and which because of its economic structure has been spoken of as the new *bourgeoisie*, will be capable of becoming the vehicle of the new spiritual and cultural tendencies foreshadowed, or whether, threatened as it is with economic crystallization, it can prove itself a genuine *élite*. It can become such an *élite* only if it is constantly revived by an influx of new forces from the Russian masses. In the Soviet Union in 1932 there were a hundred million persons below the age of twenty-five years. It is the spirit of this army of youth which will decide the shape of Russian Bolshevism to come.

Two possibilities may be discerned to-day—either Russia will sink into the morass of Asiatic terrorism, or it will reach its goal of a Russian millennium, and will realize a Russian omni-humanity that in virtue of its influence as an example will certainly not be confined to Russia. To which side the scales of the historical process will dip is a question whose answer lies hidden in the distant future.

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## EPILOGUE

AN attempt has been made in the preceding pages to present a sketch of the enduring forms of European political consciousness as they shaped themselves in the course of historical and social development from the days of Greek classical antiquity. In this attempt, two different methods of approach have been employed. Up to the end of the seventeenth century the facts were grouped in accordance with historical periods. From the eighteenth century onwards, however, the method followed was to determine the contribution made by each European *nation* to the political consciousness of the west—not forgetting, of course, those ancient, medieval, and even modern forms, which are, as it were, the foundations upon which the several national formations have been constructed.

The question now remains as to whether any common *European* motive can be discerned in these national attitudes; or, in other words, whether there exists to-day, speaking generally, anything in the nature of a European unity and, if so, how the inherent elements in this European unity may be described. The Stoic philosophers were the first to formulate the idea of a homogeneous, western, cultural unity. Before their eyes lay the fact of Alexander the Great's world empire. It was he who first welded into a unified political structure the empire of Persia and the city states of Greece; and though his reign did not long endure yet the idea of a world state could not henceforth be effaced from the political mind of the European.

We must, of course, be clear about the precise significance of the Hellenic conception of a world kingdom. This conception was one of an *oikoumene*—that is of the world as inhabited, or, rather, of the world regarded as habitable—a conception originating in the late Greek science of geography, which developed during the fourth and third centuries B.C.

The social philosophy of the Stoics transmitted this conception of the *oikoumene* to later epochs. In its philosophical aspect it

conformed exactly with Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies of the State. Plato and Aristotle envisaged the State as a harmonious unity of its members, and the Stoics transferred this harmony of the *polis* to the new conception of a world kingdom. 'The whole creation itself,' writes Chrysostom, 'has been moving on in continuous felicity, and in unending periods has shown unending time revealing itself in a providential government, and in a just and most beneficent sovereignty.' By the rational aptitude which they commonly possess, men were held capable of taking part with the gods in a universal rational community. It was a postulate of the Stoics 'that we should not live divided from one another into cities and States, because of certain special rights, but that we should treat all men as comrades of the State, as fellow-citizens; so that, as in the case of a herd which is held together by a common law, one homogeneous order of life should come into existence.' The Hellenistic, Stoic, idea of a world kingdom passed over into the organization of the Catholic Church; but the universal bond of *reason*, possessing the force of a world law, esteemed as such by the wise men of Stoicism and imposed as dogma by them upon the unlearned masses, was replaced in Catholicism by the *faith* by which alone man might be saved, the mediation of which appertained to a hierarchy of priests. The Roman conception of a world empire was fed from both these sources. Rome recognized the organizing power of Christianity; but Stoic ideas also, without the mediation of Christianity, were welded directly into the structure of the *Imperium Romanum*.

The geographical boundaries of the Roman world empire were not coincident with those of Alexander's empire—a point that requires no further elaboration here—but the expansionist spirit of Alexander lived again in the emperors of Rome. In Roman law, which became world law, we encountered the civilizing heritage of the Hellenistic *oikoumene*.

When the Roman Empire fell it was the Catholic Church which transmitted through the centuries the conception of a western community. The idea of western unity which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages is inseparable in thought from the Catholic Church. We see how in the political philosophy of Thomas

Aquinas the ancient principle of harmony runs through his macrocosm and microcosm. This uniform world idea of the later Middle Ages found its final imperishable expression in the *De Monarchia* of Dante: 'Further, the totality of men is a whole relatively to certain parts and it is likewise a part relatively to a certain whole. That is, it is a whole relatively to special kingdoms and nations as shown above; and it is a part relatively to the whole universe, as is self-evident. Therefore, what we consider a proper correspondence of the components of the totality of men to that totality itself, we should also consider a proper correspondence of the totality of men to that whole of which it, in its turn, is a component. Now its parts properly correspond to it by means of having each one single principle only. . . . Wherefore it is true that it, in its turn, properly corresponds with the universe, or with its prince (who is God, and monarch in the unqualified sense), by means of having one single principle only, to wit the sole prince. Whence it follows that the monarchy is necessary to the world for its well-being.'<sup>1</sup> Here already emphasis is laid naturally on the *temporal* power. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the supremacy of the Pope was already broken. Dante stands at the boundary between the Middle Ages and modern times. He seems here to cry a warning to the centuries to come that even in the epoch of 'special kingdoms and nations' men should preserve the universal Christian idea of the unity of the west.

As Catholicism lost its universal grasp there arose the *national* dynasties of Europe. In the Reformation and the Renaissance the modern, self-dependent individual was set free. Machiavelli proclaimed his doctrine of the 'reason of State' which relieves 'the Prince' from the obligations of Christian morality and proclaims that might alone guides political action; and all the time that the principle 'cujus regio, ejus religio' was receiving recognition in the conflicts of the Reformation, the priority of the political sphere of power was being steadily confirmed.

The Crusades, undertaken in the spirit of medieval Christian universalism, brought new requirements into being in the western world. The mercantile spirit of the later Middle Ages freed itself

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dante, *De Monarchia*, bk. i, Chap. VII, in Dante's Latin Works, Dent's Temple Classics.

slowly but surely from allegiance to the Church's condemnation of interest. Modern profit economy emerged and medieval natural economy was abandoned. The Catholic Church itself played a powerful part in the creation of modern money economy. The Medici, as we have seen, came to England as papal financiers. The world was being secularized. How was it possible—it may be asked—for the conception of European unity to hold its own in the process whose course we have here recalled in outline? Actually, it was possible, but to see how we need a clear understanding of the important transformation through which Catholic universalism passed.

When the Renaissance monarch Charles V planned a crusade, Machiavelli himself called on the Christian princes of Europe to close their ranks and form an alliance against the Turks, while great significance attaches to the *new* knot which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries began to link together the merchants and financiers in the various European capitals. The Fuggers and the Welsers of Germany had their representatives in Madrid and in Amsterdam. The Medici had business transactions with Paris and London. Mutual understandings existed and the signature of the Fuggers became more binding than the word of the Pope. Charles V became Emperor of Germany simply because the Fuggers lent him their help. The unity of money took the place of the unity of faith, and to this new unity the powers of the State itself became submissive.

When Campanella expressed his ideas of a universal *economic* community he was, of course, thinking of the monarchy of Catholic Spain as political instrument. In his work, *Monarchia Messiae*, we read: 'On the other hand, if one sole individual were to be in authority then hate, ambition, and avarice would disappear from the face of the earth. . . . Famine, likewise, would disappear. For not every territory can be barren at one and the same time; if some suffer scarcity others enjoy superabundance. If then all mankind were under the care of the same prince, he would command that the things needful for life should be brought from those lands which have more than enough to those lands which are in want, as was done in former times, from Egypt to Italy and from Africa to Sicily. [Campanella here makes direct

reference to the economic universalism of the Roman world empire.] Neither death nor war would come about through the need to seek for food; and among buyers and sellers of foreign countries, avarice would disappear.’<sup>1</sup> The same idea is expressed by Hugo Grotius, the Dutchman, except that in his case the fact of the national sovereignty of the several European states finds recognition.

‘Transit is to be granted not only to persons but to merchandise; for no one has a right to impede one nation in cultivating trade with another remote nation, for it is of advantage to the human race that such intercourse should be permitted, nor is that a damage to any one.’<sup>2</sup> This idea of a universal economic community, which appears in ever new forms in European thought from the time of Campanella to that of Adam Smith, rests on the idea of an international, Christian community of law founded on a law of nature common to all men. The doctrine of a law of nature, whose progressive secularization from Suarez and Grotius to Spinoza and Hobbes we cannot here elaborate, thus took the place of the faith world of united medieval Catholicism. In the work of Suarez, *Tractatus de Legibus*,<sup>3</sup> we read: ‘The ground of this part of the law is the truth that the human race, however much it be divided into nations and states, possesses nevertheless at all times a certain unity which is not only one in form but is at once political and moral, as is shown by the natural precept of mutual love and mercy which extends to all mankind, even to foreigners and men of every nation. Therefore, while every sovereign State, republic, or principedom is a complete community in itself, it is yet, when mankind is kept in view, a part of this totality, for these bodies are never alone and self-sufficient to the extent of being in no need of the mutual aid and co-operation which are sometimes for their greater good and use, or are sometimes occasioned by moral requirements or the necessities of practical life. They are, therefore, much in need of a law, so that, by such unity and community, they might be rightly governed and set in

<sup>1</sup> Campanella, *Monarchia Messiae*, p. 14 f., quoted in Jacob ter Meulen, *Der Gedanke der internationalen Organisation in seiner Entwicklung, 1300-1800*, Haag 1917, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Whewell's ed., lib. ii, cap. ii, sect. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. lib. ii, cap. xix, g.



order. While, then, this is frequently so in virtue of natural reason, yet is not this sufficient in all cases, and that is the reason why some special laws might well have been added by the practice of these same nations.' Grotius, similarly, recognized the society of Christian States as an autonomous collectivity. Both the Spaniard and the Dutchman taught the doctrine of an international juridical body, so that the need felt by their countries for greater legal security might be theoretically legitimized.

The doctrines of natural law and of economic universalism are akin to one another. That these ideas imply the idea of peace needs no further evidence. From the days of Dante, Marsilius of Padua, Thomas More, and Erasmus the voices proclaiming peace were never silent in the consciousness of the west. It was the *Pax Romana* that had long since raised this postulate of western humanism.

As we have previously tried to point out, a significant economic change made itself widely felt about the end of the sixteenth century. The economic power enjoyed by traders with distant countries and by financiers began to recede and the states as such felt the need to fortify their economic positions. For the first time in modern history there emerges State capitalism, a factor to which economic historical research has given a rather summary expression under the heading of mercantilism. The era of feudalism could be overcome by the states only through standing armies and a strong, reliable, and efficient officialdom; but tasks of this kind could be carried through only by means of the State's own economic initiative. The autarchy of the State and the slackening of European unity were the inevitable consequences of this process.

Yet, despite the Thirty Years War and the campaigns in which Louis XIV overran Europe, the seventeenth century actually saw a renewed sense of European unity. The Belgian historian L. Dumont-Wilden, who recently devoted an interesting study to the development of the European spirit, characterizes the contribution of France to the culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the following words: 'La France de Louis XIV, reprenant la succession des rois d'Espagne qu'elle avait vaincus, avait voulu s'imposer à l'Europe comme *la grande puissance catholique*;

mais l'esprit classique qu'elle avait créé, en la débarrassant du lien qui l'unissait étroitement à l'Église, en inventant la notion *laïque* de l'universel, allait lui assurer la plus longue domination spirituelle qu'une nation ait exercée sur les autres depuis l'antiquité. Les mêmes peuples qui avaient repoussé de toute leur énergie l'hégémonie politique de la France admirent en effet, de leur plein gré et presque sans conteste, son hégémonie intellectuelle et "culturelle" comme on dit aujourd'hui. Et pendant deux siècles environ, cette hégémonie s'exercera d'un bout à l'autre de l'ancien continent créant un véritable esprit européen, faisant accepter la langue française comme la langue européenne, imposant sans effort les arts, les mœurs, et le style de la France.<sup>1</sup> French seventeenth-century civilization made European universalism a reality by fusing this universalism with the national sphere.

But this does not mean that the historic process had come to a standstill. The absolutism of the closing years of the sixteenth and of the seventeenth century was overcome by an alliance between princes and *bourgeoisie* in a struggle against dying feudalism. But the *bourgeoisie*, with its newly acquired powers, soon felt the autarchy of the State as a bondage. It was the French Revolution of 1789 which broke this bondage. The law of nature was once again brought into use, this time as the intellectual weapon of the *tiers état* against absolutism, and the harvest of this *bourgeois* revolutionary thought is garnered in the first four articles of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man, and of Citizens*, of 26th August 1789. Not even the Napoleonic dictatorship shook the civil foundations of the French Revolution: on the contrary it made it wholly triumphant.

The Holy Alliance was a vain attempt to create an association of European states on a basis of dynastic legitimatism. Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England did at first hold together, but after a little, when Napoleon, the great adversary, was finally crushed, the alliance lost its binding power. From the year 1830 the policy of the European nations reverted to the principle of the 'Balance of Power' which had already found clear expression in the peace treaty of Utrecht, concluded between England and Spain in 1713. The second Article of this *Treaty of Peace and Friendship* runs as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dumont-Wilden, *L'Évolution de l'esprit européen*, Paris 1937, p. 67 f.

follows: 'But whereas the War, which is so happily ended by this Peace, was at first undertaken, and then carried on for many years with the utmost Force, at immense Charge, and with almost infinite Slaughter, because of the great danger which threatened the Liberty and Safety of all *Europe*, from the too close Conjunction of the Kingdoms of *Spain* and *France*; and whereas to take away all Uneasiness and Suspicion concerning such Conjunction out of the minds of People, and to settle and establish the Peace and Tranquillity of Christendom by an equal Balance of Power (which is the best and most solid Foundation of a mutual Friendship, and of a Concord which will be lasting on all sides), as well the Catholick King, as the most Christian King, have consented, that care should be taken, by sufficient Precautions, that the Kingdoms of *Spain* and *France* should never come and be united under the same Dominion.'<sup>1</sup> This principle of 'Balance of Power' was, however, not strong enough to prevent war either in the eighteenth or the nineteenth century.

New interests of State created new alliances, the 'Balance' was upset and had to be restored by force of arms. Yet again and again, at each experience of the complications of war, there arose a yearning for peace, bound up with the thought of a community of European states. It is worth while recalling the memorable correspondence which was exchanged between Ernest Renan and the German scholar David Friedrich Strauss at the time of the Franco-German War of 1870-1. Full of anxiety for the future of Europe, the French philosopher wrote at that time to the German scholar: 'It seems that peace cannot be concluded between France and Germany direct. This is a task for Europe only, which disapproved of the war and which must desire that no member of the European family should be weakened overmuch. . . . Every other solution will merely leave the door open for unceasing acts of revenge. If Europe will do this work, then a seed of the most fruitful institution for the future of Europe will have been planted: I have in mind a Central Authority, a kind of Congress of the United States of Europe, which will administer justice to the nations, which will place itself above them, and will regulate

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jacob ter Meulen, *Der Gedanke der internationalen Organisation in seiner Entwicklung, 1300-1800*, Haag 1917, p. 41.

the principle of nationality by the principle of federation.' Another point expressed in this correspondence seems to have a bearing on the genesis of Europeanism. 'Have you observed,' Renan writes, 'that neither in the eight Beatitudes, nor in the Sermon on the Mount, nor in the Gospel itself is there a single reference to the virtues of militarism as a means of winning the Kingdom of Heaven?' In the seventies of the nineteenth century the idea of the Christian universalism of Europe had not yet lost its efficacy.

Statesmen, however, paid no heed to Renan's warning. The principle of the Balance of Power was again applied, but failed, as a matter of fact, to prevent the World War from breaking out.

Afterwards a world, wearied by war, believed that in the League of Nations it had taken a decisive step towards the pacification of the world. For it was a *world-wide* conception that lay at the very basis of the institution of the League of Nations. It was an ideology of a universal-democratic and religious kind, that originated in the fundamentally Puritan-Christian standpoint of President Wilson. But this world idea was at once confronted with the historical and social actualities of the case. Moreover, the United States of America did not themselves follow their President; and this refusal of the United States to take its part in the League of Nations brought to naught from the very outset any hope of unification of the world. The subsequent history of the League, which need not here be set forth in detail, has made it evident that the *world-wide* aim of the League was a pure illusion.

We have only to glance at events in the Far East, where the dynamic forces of history are in spate, to see that these are not to be stemmed by any kind of 'recommendation' which may emanate from the League of Nations. If we interpret aright the tendencies of historical development discernible to-day, Asia will become, in the near or distant future, the possession of the Asiatics.

The League of Nations as a world union has proved to be an illusion. It has been thought of as a democratic world parliament but its 'Government' has had at its command no kind of authority. The history of the last fifteen years of the League of Nations shows that the European states (even the western

democracies) change the principles of their structure. A new State autarchy reminiscent of the period of mercantilism is in process of formation, and it may indeed be termed neo-mercantilism. The State executives were driven increasingly to weaken the legislative powers in their efforts to cope with those tasks which began with the *total* conduct of war in the World War. Moreover, the western democracies, including the United States of America, tend to approximate to the type of the totalitarian states save that, in their case, fundamental democratic laws seem traditionally sufficiently secure to outlast the strain put upon them by totalitarian executives.

The League of Nations, however, is still constituted according to the democratic structure of pre-War days, and this explains its breakdown. Even the executive of the League needs to be refashioned in conformity with the new State autarchy of this age.

This will be possible only when the collective European consciousness, so perilously jeopardized to-day, has found institutional existence. The failure of the League of Nations in the world-wide sense by no means involves rejection of all political co-operation on the part of the European states—among which, if the general purport of this book is correct, both the United States of America and Soviet Russia are to be numbered in spirit. Should co-operation of this nature be finally frustrated and the catastrophe of a new world war befall Europe, none could forecast the future shape of the western world.

Meanwhile we look in vain for a closely knit European moral and spiritual *élite*, who might direct the ponderous and complex machinery of the modern great powers to its true ends and aims. Gone are the philosophers of classical Greece, the Stoic sages, the monks of the Middle Ages, the humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; in vain did the great rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries strive to demonstrate that nature and society were a unity; the nobility of Europe has vanished; dynasties have lost their influence; 'Internationals' of the workers have become but a name; the ruling classes of Europe, among whom, before the War, everybody knew everybody, have been obliged to accommodate themselves to the new State autarchy; it would appear as if sport and the films were the

sole remaining common concerns of Europe. Yet, when all is said, we may, perhaps, still hope that in all the European states of to-day there is growing up a new generation to whom the destiny of this old continent may once again be committed.

Over the western world at this moment there broods an uncertain fate. There is proof enough of danger in Mussolini's theses on the function of the State in educating the people for war—theses to which he gave such unambiguous expression in his *Doctrine of Fascism*. There we read: 'Fascism, in the first instance, thinks of the future development of mankind purely from the standpoint of political reality, and does not believe either in the possibility or in the utility of perpetual peace. Hence, it rejects pacifism, which, under a plausible noble-mindedness, hides the refusal of conflict and a cowardly spirit. War alone raises the energies of man to their highest pitch, and makes those nations noble who dare to engage in it.' The same doctrines are expounded by the rulers of Fascist Germany. When important European states, whose share in the formation of the political consciousness of the western world we have, we think, impartially described, are ruled and directed by maxims such as these, then the very survival of Europe is subject daily to a most serious menace.

To complete our brief sketch of the idea of western *unity* let us turn to one other viewpoint. In the first chapter of this work we had occasion to refer to the peculiar structure of western rationalism. Let us consider this rationalism afresh, and from a higher standpoint.

Western rationalism bears the impress of the classical philosophy of Greece. It has fixed for all time the structure of the European spirit. Georg Misch, a German historian of philosophy and a pupil of Wilhelm Dilthey, has brilliantly described the Greek exposition of western rationalism: 'The attainment of a rational comprehension of the world by that favoured nation, the Greek, is truly a marvel, for the hypotheses of their thought possessed the power of extracting from nature the thought-forms immanent in it. This would be miraculous—like the philosophic construction of the idea of the interconnection of thought-forms—were it not the outcome of a constantly renewed, a disinterested

and courageous attempt to look things in the face in that intellectual battlefield where victory goes to tenacity. The assumptions on which thinking rests are rooted in the soil of a national life, and there they become one, but this Greek *unity* of fundamental assumptions is not, as in the Indian and Chinese civilizations, merely the internal cohesion of a dogma deduced from a view of life rooted in Far Eastern religion and magic, but the free mobility of a *thought form* in which scope remains for the individual's self-directed perception. Knowledge, which tethers the flight of thought to the beholding of objects, must itself, if it is to be fruitful, be bound up with a *free personality* [our italics] that dares look with its *own* eyes at the world. The intellectual attitude of the Greek sage has here, in theory, from the very outset made for a philosophical questioning of that astounding spectacle which lies displayed in the world. It is at once an expression of that personal freedom referred to *and* the common, pan-human basis of Greek metaphysics and science. And yet here, in this theoretical attitude, and in the realization and appreciation it has received through the Greeks, there lies for all philosophy a hidden danger which has but gradually come to light as, on the predestined march of civilization, pure perception, having freed itself from metaphysics, has acquired the fixed forms of scientific procedure. Once again the issue turns upon the vitalizing power of knowledge. The question here is one of the relation of perceptive thought to the active life, of theory to "practice": it does not deal with the relation of either of these to the personal life of the philosopher. The practical application of knowledge is, of course, a feature of the Greek conception of the sage, nor does it ever occur to any eminent Greek thinker even to question the unity subsisting between life and doctrine.

' . . . But in the actual course of living there does appear a cleavage. The *formation* of life, which proceeds from one's own power of thought, and the *regulation* of life, which applies the acquisitions of thought to the ends of action, do part company. And practical action proves its superiority just in so far as the theoretical attitude becomes attenuated on a purely intellectual plane of thought as opposed to that of life. The development of science gives rise (as to its own shadow) to a condition of the

understanding in which knowledge may be securely held while yet its obligations are ignored.' <sup>1</sup> Now the thing that matters most is exactly this responsibility of 'knowledge.' Freedom of thought is *real* freedom only when it involves the freedom, dignity, and human responsibility of the individual. Plato's *Apology of Socrates* has made this principle unforgettably clear: 'Athenians, I hold you in the highest regard and love; but I will obey God rather than you: and as long as I have breath and strength I will not cease from philosophy and from exhorting you. . . . And I think that no better piece of fortune has ever befallen you in Athens than my service to God. For I spend my whole life in going about and persuading you all to give your first and chiefest care to the perfection of your souls, and not till you have done that to think of your bodies, or your wealth; and telling you that virtue does not come from wealth, but that wealth, and every other good thing which men have, whether in public or in private, comes from virtue. If then I corrupt the youth by this teaching the mischief is great: but if any man says that I teach anything else, he speaks falsely. And therefore, Athenians, I say . . . either acquit me, or do not acquit me: but be sure that I shall not alter my way of life; no, not if I have to die for it many times.'

Freedom of thought and doctrine, the dignity of the individual, and human responsibility towards the community and the State are as exemplified in the life and death of Socrates, the principal doctrines of Stoic and of Roman philosophy. In the seventeenth century, when western rationalism became active at a new level of the European historical process, both Hobbes and Spinoza propounded afresh the *unity* of life and doctrine. Hobbes gave powerful expression to the constructive rationalism of his age, and in his *De Cive*, in the dedicatory epistle to the Earl of Devonshire, he writes: 'And truly the geometricians have very admirably performed their part. For whatsoever assistance doth accrue to the life of man, whether from the observation of the heavens or from the description of the earth, from the notation of times, or from the remotest experiments of navigation; finally, whatsoever things they are in which the present age doth differ

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Misch, *Der Weg in die Philosophie*, Leipzig 1926, p. 276 f.



from the rude simpleness of antiquity, we must acknowledge to be a debt which we owe merely to Geometry. If the moral philosophers had as happily discharged their duty, I know not what could have been added by human industry to the completion of that happiness which is consistent with human life. For were the nature of human actions as distinctly known as the nature of *quantity* in geometrical figures, the strength of *avarice* and *ambition*, which is sustained by the erroneous opinions of the vulgar as touching the nature of *right* and *wrong*, would presently faint and languish; and mankind should enjoy such an immortal peace, that unless it were for habitation, on supposition that the earth should grow too narrow for her inhabitants, there would hardly be left any pretence for war.<sup>1</sup> It is the Socratic, the Platonic spirit that confronts us here in Hobbes.

To this document we would add a passage from a letter of Spinoza, addressed to Professor Fabritius of Heidelberg, deputy of the Elector Palatine, on 30th March 1673. Fabritius offered Spinoza the chair of philosophy on the express assurance that 'the liberty of philosophizing' would be allowed to the great Dutch thinker. This is the reply of Spinoza: 'I reflect, in the first place, that I should have to give up philosophical research if I am to find time for teaching a class. I reflect, moreover, that I cannot tell within what bounds I ought to confine that philosophical freedom you mention, in order to escape any charge of attempting to disturb the established religion. Religious discussions arise not so much from men's zeal for religion itself as from their various dispositions and love of contradiction, which leads them into a habit of decrying and condemning everything, however justly it be said. Of this I have already had experience in my private and solitary life; much more, then, should I have to fear it after assenting to this honourable condition. You see, therefore, that I am not holding back in the hope of some better post, but for mere love of quietness, which I think I can in some measure secure if I abstain from lecturing in public.'

This refusal of a public professorship by Spinoza is not simply an easy escape. We well know the deep sense of responsibility

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. William Molesworth, London 1841, vol. ii, p. iv.

which Spinoza reveals in his writings, in regard to the formation of social and political life.

With the discovery during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of a historical world portrayed in numberless books, and built into the European consciousness, it has become clear that it is impossible to construct social and political conditions *more geometrico*. This, however, does not mean that we must fly from our present plight to the perilous darkness of blood, of instinct, or of passion.

Even Hegel, possibly the last great systematic philosopher of the west, and one who perhaps more than any other has explored the historical formation of western man, has left us an admonition on the way: 'It is a great perversity, a perversity which, maybe, does honour to man, to refuse to accept in belief what *reason* does not justify.'

Reason *lays hold on life*. This does not mean that the life-process in its social and historical entirety can be rationally attenuated, it only means that reason masters life and can comprehend all its dynamic power. This is the whole meaning of Hegel's frequently misunderstood dictum that 'the actual is reasonable and that the reasonable is actual.'

This ethos of reason is the common European inheritance. *Our task is to hand it down to the generations to come, even if we should have to defend it on the field of battle*. Apart from this spirit the idea and the fact of Europeanism lose their significance: we destroy the ground on which we have built and hope to build. Without reason the European would sink into barbarism.

Thought and action are as closely related as inspiration and expiration. In the course of western history rationalism has frequently been cut off from its quickening springs. The rational capitalist technology of modern times, for instance, has, in many aspects, been thought of and developed as an end in itself without correlation to the social and historical order of western life. But under such circumstances rationalism loses its responsibility, becomes irrationalism, and is opposed to the whole meaning of western existence. Technology is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. Man alone is the end of man.

We have only to look at Asia to grasp the significance of the

deep and essential connection between European science and the European way of life. Only a few decades ago—about 1868—Japan adopted European technology, but to this day Japan has been unable to adjust its own peculiar mode of life to the technology it has adopted. European capitalism has, of course, acted as a disintegrating power on the old forms of life in Japan, as it has done in China and in India. But in Japan at least it seems to have been possible to preserve to some extent the feudal structure of Japanese society, so that there has arisen a specifically *Asiatic* capitalism, which has led within recent months under the banner of the Emperor of Japan to a dangerous 'victory' in China.

Technology, the means, may be separated from man who is its end; yet it is only in the alliance of the two that the European inheritance, which has stood the test of more than two thousand years, can find protection and security. Let us name, once again, its basic elements—freedom of thought and doctrine; the dignity of the individual; a human responsibility to society and the State.

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